

**Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) for the West Bank Redevelopment  
District in Eau Claire, Wisconsin**

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## **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to everyone who helped make this project a success!

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## **Executive Summary**

The West Bank Redevelopment District is a 30 acre area along the Chippewa River in Eau Claire, WI that has been identified for redevelopment. The area used to be largely industrial and has experienced a lot of neglect in recent years. Redevelopment recommendations have been made, but the redevelopment is still in progress. The Redevelopment Authority of Eau Claire has been buying properties in the area and plans to accept proposals for redevelopment in the next couple of years. In order to improve the health of the community and promote health equity through the redevelopment process, an abbreviated or “rapid” Health Impact Assessment was conducted. This HIA addresses economic disparities that exist within the community and provides recommendations on how to facilitate positive health outcomes.

The goal of the HIA was to include the voices of key stakeholders and identify key research questions to address during the development process. These questions focus on how changes to the built environment have potential effects on the health of the community. Five key areas of focus were identified by the steering committee and through key informant interviews: housing, green space and trails, neighborhood safety, access to fresh foods, and social cohesion. This report provides an overview of the relevant literature review on the impacts of the built environment on health, describes the results of local demographic data and the results of media analyses, and presents the perspective of key informants. The conclusion outlines how aspects of the redevelopment would likely impact the health of the community. The abbreviated recommendations are listed below.

### **Recommendation 1: Housing**

1. Develop mixed use, mixed income housing.
2. Rehabilitate current homes.
3. Address the potential for gentrification and displacement of current residents.

### **Recommendation 2: Green Space and Trails**

1. Construct bike/walking path at proposed location along the Chippewa River.
2. Develop park space along the Chippewa River for mixed use.
3. Promote walkability throughout the district.

### **Recommendation 3: Neighborhood Safety**

1. Improve current street lighting.
2. Add fences or other security measures around homes and buildings.
3. Create a Neighborhood Watch Group.

**Recommendation 4: Access to Fresh Foods**

1. Build grocery store in the West Bank District.
2. Establish year round public market.
3. Implement community gardens.

**Recommendation 5: Social Cohesion**

1. Construct multiple community gathering locations in the West Bank District.
2. Develop a Neighborhood Association.

These recommendations will be reported to the City of Eau Claire. If the recommendations and considered the implemented, a monitoring plan was developed to evaluate the outcomes of the HIA.

## Table of Contents

<b>Statement of Purpose</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>City of Eau Claire Redevelopment Project</b>	<b>6</b>
Project Background and History	6
Current Plans for Redevelopment	7
Need for redevelopment	8
Challenges	9
<b>Health Impact Assessments</b>	<b>10</b>
History of HIAs	10
HIA Process	11
Health Equity	13
<b>West Bank Redevelopment HIA Step 1: Screening</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>West Bank Redevelopment HIA Step 2: Scoping</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>West Bank Redevelopment HIA Step 3: Assessment</b>	<b>21</b>
Existing Data	21
Literature Review: Built Environment and the Impacts on Public Health	22
Eau Claire West Bank Data: Demographics	28
Eau Claire West Bank Data: Housing	31
Eau Claire West Bank Data: Green Space and Trails	35
Eau Claire West Bank Data: Neighborhood Safety	36
Eau Claire West Bank Data: Access to Fresh Foods	37
Eau Claire West Bank Data: Social Cohesion	38
Media Analysis	39
Key Informant Interviews	43
Evaluation of Potential Health Impacts	53
Eau Claire West Bank: Housing	54
Eau Claire West Bank: Green Space and Trails	56
Eau Claire West Bank: Neighborhood Safety	57
Eau Claire West Bank: Access to Fresh Foods	59
Eau Claire West Bank: Social Cohesion	61
<b>West Bank Redevelopment HIA Step 4: Recommendations</b>	<b>63</b>
Recommendation 1: Housing	64
Recommendation 2: Green Space and Trails	64
Recommendation 3: Neighborhood Safety	64
Recommendation 4: Access to Fresh Foods	64
Recommendation 5: Social Cohesion	64
<b>West Bank Redevelopment HIA Step 5: Reporting</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>West Bank Redevelopment HIA Step 6: Evaluation</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>68</b>

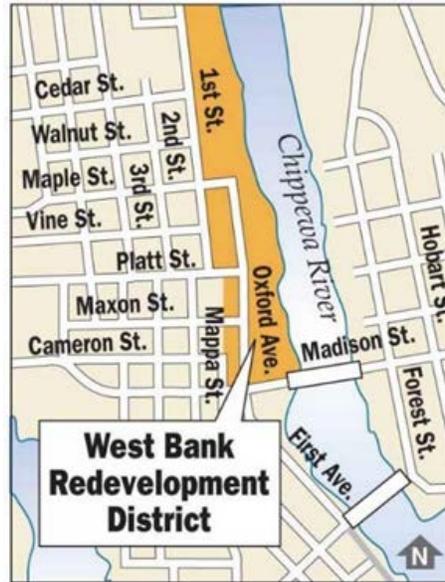
## **Statement of purpose**

The purpose of this project was to complete a rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to evaluate the current plans for the Eau Claire West Bank Redevelopment Project and use available research to develop evidence based recommendations to facilitate positive public health outcomes through the project. This report provides background on the West Bank Redevelopment project, gives a history of HIAs, and explains each step of the HIA that is conducted. The HIA provides a literature review of information related to health and the built environment, existing data for the West Bank community, a media analysis of articles and news stories surrounding the redevelopment project, and interviews with key individuals involved with and potentially affected by the project. Based off the information collected, the HIA provides recommendations for the project to improve health equity through the redevelopment.

## **City of Eau Claire West Bank Redevelopment Project**

### **Project Background and History**

The Eau Claire West Bank Redevelopment District was established in May 2008. The West Bank area is 30 acres and located along the Chippewa River. It is bordered by the former railroad corridor on the north, Madison Street on the south, the Chippewa River on the east, and First Street from the former railroad corridor south to Platt Street on the west. The map below highlights the West Bank District. In 2011, the City of Eau Claire initiated a neighborhood plan, the West Riverside District, which includes the West Bank area. This specific area used to be largely industrial but now has a lot of vacant and dilapidating properties. In recent years, several properties have been purchased with the intention of redevelopment. The Redevelopment Authority has not yet made decisions on how the properties will be used. Future plans will include ways in which to utilize these properties as well as the waterfront ("West Riverside District Plan," 2011).



(Dowd, 2012)

**Current Plans for Redevelopment**

There are a number of different proposed redevelopment ideas for the West Riverside District. Though high level guidance is offered, there are few final plans for how redevelopment will actually occur. The table below outlines each proposed plan and explains its specificity. Low specificity indicates that the plans are vague or generic with no detailed plans or recommendations, medium specificity indicates some detailed plans for the proposed recommendation but not entirely comprehensive, and high specificity indicates precise and explicit detailed plans for the proposal. The recommendations are taken primarily from the West Riverside District Plan and the Eau Claire Health Chapter Comprehensive Plan.

Current Plans for Redevelopment		
Indicator Area	Proposed Plans	Level of Specificity
Housing	Develop mixed use housing with commercial properties on the ground level near Madison St. and transition to multiple-family housing along Oxford Street. The housing sites along Oxford St. will be up to four stories high and will include parking under the buildings. The recommendations include the use of high quality materials and site improvements. A map was developed to outline the potential development patterns (see page 10).	Low
	The City of Eau Claire Housing Division administers a Rehabilitation Assistance program that	Medium

	<p>can be used to redevelop homes in the West Bank District. The program provides low interest loans for housing rehabilitation, specifically for moderate-value, older homes. Part of the program is tailored for homeowners and landlords with annual incomes at 50% or less than the regional medium. Some participants may also receive grants to remove lead paint or asbestos hazards. However, the amount of money provided by this program is limited and only about 2 dozen homeowners are assisted each year.</p>	
	<p>The Intensified Housing Code Compliance Program is administered by the Eau Claire City-County Health Department. This program aims to eliminate serious health or safety hazards associated with deteriorated or unsafe housing. Exterior conditions surveys are conducted in the West Bank District and properties with extensive exterior problems receive an interior inspection. Violations must be corrected by the owner and failure to do so may result in legal action. This program has been enforced since 1982 and will be used in this neighborhood to address some of the current housing problems. Some homeowners may receive financial assistance to make required changes.</p>	High
<b>Green Space and Trails</b>	<p>Land north of Maple Street, from First Street to the river, will be acquired for park space. This will include filtering storm water runoff, creating paths for biking and walking, developing green space for recreation, and allowing for neighborhood activities and gatherings. Park design will take into consideration water quality, animal habitat, overall appearance, and year-round use.</p>	Medium
	<p>Former railroad corridors will be redeveloped into recreational walking and biking trails. This includes a path along the Chippewa River that will connect with existing paths east of the river via the trestle bridge that crosses the river.</p>	High
	<p>Kessler Park may be sold for housing development and all current activities in that area will be moved to the newly developed park space along the river. This park will be retained until replacement land has been acquired and improved.</p>	High
<b>Neighborhood Safety</b>	<p>The City of Eau Claire does its best to manage and enforce laws throughout the city. However, some responsibility must be taken by individuals and communities to do the right thing and respect the rights of others. Collective actions of the population can be used to address problems within the community.</p>	Low
	<p>The design and location of the buildings in the West Bank area will be developed to ensure security for residents and business owners. This includes utilizing differences in elevation, fencing, walls, and plants to increase privacy and safety. According to the recommendations, land developers and the City Plan Commission will decide on a case-by-case basis how to develop each property.</p>	Medium
	<p>Many of the current recommendations utilize underground parking instead of street parking. This recommendation is targeted toward increasing parking availability and improving aesthetic, but will also increase safety.</p>	Low
	<p>Parks in the area will include high levels of activity, visibility, and lighting in order to ensure security.</p>	Medium
<b>Access to Fresh Foods</b>	<p>Development of a year-round public market on the former site of Lange’s Cannery. The project is planned to include local vendors including farmers, bakers, butchers, florists, candy makers, fishmongers, vintners, brewers, craftspeople, etc. Other design ideas include a commercial kitchen for cooking classes, attached greenhouses, a food cellar, rental space for weddings and seminars, a restaurant/café, outdoor ice skating rink, botanical gardens, and food hub.</p>	High

<b>Social Cohesion</b>	Add additional performing or visual arts venues to the West Bank are to develop an arts district and enhance the image of the neighborhood. The Children’s Theater will remain and will serve as a gathering place for this community.	Medium
	Create a neighborhood organization that can advocate for the interests of the community. Other Eau Claire neighborhood organizations can serve as models and can provide assistance and mentoring as needed. The City of Eau Claire should provide financial support and can also provide recommendations in regard to procedures and documents. City staff can serve as facilitators. The neighborhood organization should make an effort to include representation from all racial and socio-economic groups in the community. The role of the neighborhood organization will include advising the city on long-range projects, development applications, security and maintenance, crime, and any other concerns.	High

As illustrated in the table above, the West Riverside District Plan includes both specific and conceptual recommendations regarding the West Bank redevelopment. The recommendations consist of creating green public space and bike trails, developing new housing, retail, and other commercial uses in mixed-use arrangements, and rehabilitating the housing in the area. Increasing green space includes utilizing the land along the Chippewa riverfront, converting old railroads into bike and walking paths, and creating park amenities such as scenic overlooks and community gardens. The City of Eau Claire has recently started a highly detailed park plan project that will delineate the public space from the private development opportunities. The anticipated completion date for this plan is summer or fall of 2015. Developing parkland, commercial, and housing involves buying more properties in the area, razing run-down buildings, and constructing new structures. Specific high-traffic areas, such as the intersection of Oxford Avenue and Madison Street would be targeted for higher commercial use, for instance, restaurants, bars, and retail shops. Suggestions for updating the built environment include rehabilitation of public streets with pedestrian-friendly characteristics, installing street lighting, and planting trees. The recommendations for housing include specific areas in which to build single- and multi-family homes. Housing improvements also include enhanced code compliance for things such as minimum building deficiencies, trash, yard maintenance, and parking. Suggestions for balconies and fences for security purposes were also made. The map below highlights how specific areas will be used for mixed-use, residential, and commercial purposes.



(“West Riverside District Plan”, 2011)

Other recommendations for the project consist of minimizing surface parking and locating the majority of parking underground, below the buildings. Additionally, it was suggested that developers utilize specific façade designs, landscaping, and heights for buildings to maximize the relationship between the green spaces and the buildings. This would also help to increase privacy and security. The redevelopment plan also includes adding art venues to the neighborhood, such as theaters and museums, to improve the image of the area. Finally, because the West Bank area is so near to the Mayo Clinic Health System – Eau Claire main hospital campus, the project can utilize this resource and relationship in the redevelopment. Because the Mayo Clinic has many employees, there is the potential for them to rent or purchase residences in the West Bank once the redevelopment is complete. Moreover, the great number of preventative public health benefits that may come from this redevelopment also provides an incentive for them to be involved in the planning process.



(“West Riverside District Plan”, 2011)

### **Need for Redevelopment**

Due to the area's history and current dilapidated state, the West Bank area of Eau Claire is in need of redevelopment. Currently, access to resources such as fresh food is limited. Additionally, there are limited opportunities for residents to utilize green space for exercise or fresh air. Furthermore, past industries have increased pollution and created brownfields in the area. This makes it hard for reinvestment on land that has both prime riverfront and central city geographic advantages. Furthermore, the West Bank area of Eau Claire is experiencing a disproportionate number of residents who are living in poverty and do not own their own home ("American FactFinder", 2014). All of these factors can influence the health outcomes of the West Bank residents. For example, if individuals cannot access fresh foods, they are more likely to eat a poor diet, suffer from obesity, and develop chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease ("Food Deserts", 2014). These health outcomes can be exacerbated if individuals do not have the opportunity to engage in physical activity through the use of green space and trails in safe neighborhoods. Furthermore, if individuals have a lower socio-economic status, they are more likely to experience higher levels of stress, which can also lead to chronic disease (Roy and Riley, 2014). However, with specific redevelopment plans, these things can change. By creating green spaces, increasing access to resources, and rehabilitating the neighborhood, residents can improve their health. However, the current redevelopment plans do not address health equity concerns in their recommendations. This is necessary because the built environment plays such a major role in health outcomes. For example access to fresh foods, opportunities to engage in physical activity, safe and affordable housing, and neighborhood safety can all affect the health of individuals within a community ("Healthy Community Design", 2008). A public health perspective can provide recommendations to the redevelopment that can ensure positive health outcomes for the area, hopefully making it a superior project.

### **Challenges**

While there is potential for the West Bank Redevelopment Project to have a positive influence on health equity, there are several factors to be aware of because well intentioned efforts can have negative unintended consequences. It is important to consider all potential outcomes of each aspect of the redevelopment, both positive and negative. While rehabilitating housing and creating new commercial spaces can potentially improve the economy and aesthetics of the area, it could have a negative impact on the current residents. For example, if improvements are made and cost of living increases, current low-income residents may be pushed out of the neighborhood. Therefore “moving” communities experiencing inequity to other places rather than actually addressing issues that residents are facing. Additionally, not providing a venue for fresh food access may prevent residents from eating a regular, healthy diet. Each step of the redevelopment is essential in considering the health outcomes of the residents. It is important to take these potential outcomes into consideration when completing the HIA. The recommendations made by this HIA considered the current redevelopment plans and potential alternatives, weighing the probable negative and positive impacts of each piece in order to provide suggestions that reflect these challenges in the redevelopment.

### **Health Impact Assessments**

The National Research Council developed the most widely used definition of a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). It states that an HIA is:

A systematic process that uses an array of data sources and analytic methods and considers input from stakeholders to determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, program, or project on the health of a population and the distribution of the effects within the population. HIA provides recommendations on monitoring and managing those effects. (“Health Impact Assessment,” 2014).

As explained by Human Impact Partners, an HIA uses qualitative and quantitative research methods to gather data regarding various community perspectives on a specific project. The data is used to develop

recommendations for a policy change to improve the health of a population (“New to HIA?”, 2014).

HIAs often focus on health equity, which means that all people have the opportunity to live a healthy life, regardless of their circumstances.

### **History of HIAs**

The first HIA wasn't conducted in the United States until the 1990s. However, the history behind HIAs goes back to 1969, when the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) required a study of environmental and health effects. This is the first time that health impacts were addressed. Another event leading to HIAs was the Health Promotion/Healthy Public Policy in the 1986 Ottawa Charter, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). Finally, in the 1990s, WHO published the “Gothenburg Consensus Paper on HIA”. Several other reports also recommended the analysis of potential health impacts and health equity through policy. In the 2000s, HIAs grew in acceptance. The World Bank began to require HIAs for all large projects and an HIA was proposed for the Alaska North Slope Oil Lease. Large organizations began to realize the importance of HIAs and how they can be used to influence the policy process and improve health outcomes. In more recent years, HIAs are used regularly in the United States and the North American HIA Practice Standards were published, creating standardized guidelines for the HIA process. (Spahr et al., 2014). These standards are titled “Minimum Elements and Practice Standards for Health Impact Assessments”. This document outlines the pieces that are essential to completing a successful HIA and standards for how it can best be conducted. These standards can be used by policy-makers, educators, evaluators, and practitioners to implement and measure the HIA process (Bhatia, Farhang, Heller, Lee, Orenstein, Richardson, and Wernham, 2014). HIAs have been proven to be a successful tool in influencing policy change. HIAs can be used for a wide array of policies and projects, they consider both positive and negative health impacts, they use a mixed methods research approach, and include community perspectives to inform recommendations. This

allows for a comprehensive look at an issue and has the potential for widespread and long-term impacts.

### **HIA Process**

A standard HIA has 6 steps: Screening, Scoping, Assessment, Recommendations, Reporting, and Monitoring and Evaluation. Each step described below is crucial to the process.

**Screening.** The screening stage is used to determine whether an HIA is the right tool for a particular policy. HIAs are done prospectively, meaning that an upcoming project is identified and the HIA is completed before the decision-making process is complete. As a part of this stage, it is important to consider whether the HIA can be completed in the allotted timeframe and whether it will influence the policy. Key stakeholders can be involved during this stage to provide insight and knowledge.

**Scoping.** The second step develops the plan for the HIA. This stage defines the timeline, classifies health outcomes to research, considers which methods to use, and identifies participants to involve in the HIA. This step is important in preparing the remaining steps of the HIA. It develops the work plan, prioritizes specific topics, and recognizes potential challenges.

**Assessment.** The third step ascertains existing conditions, identifies the population affected by the proposed policy, and determines the potential health impact. This process looks at positive and negative health outcomes, including risks and benefits of the potential impacts. This stage uses a variety of data collection methods to make these assessments. First, a literature review is conducted to gather data and information relative to the HIA. Additionally, existing data is gathered on environmental and social indicators of health factors related to the project. In some cases, new reviews or analyses are done where current data is not adequate. This can be done through a variety of methods such as surveys, review of medical records, asset mapping, observation, media analysis, or photo-voice. Community perspectives are also gathered through key informant interviews, focus groups, surveys, or town hall meetings. This step provides the basis for creating recommendations in the next step. It takes

into account the data and community feedback and makes informed judgments with the information available.

**Recommendations.** Recommendations make specific suggestions to the proposed project or policy to facilitate positive health outcomes and reduce potential negative outcomes. The recommendations are based on the evidence and feedback obtained through the previous three steps. It is essential that the recommendations are constructed from facts and developed with identified stakeholders and community input.

**Reporting.** The fifth step communicates the findings and recommendations to the decision makers. Depending on the project or policy, it is important to consider the possible communications methods to determine which is most appropriate. The reporting can occur through a written report, a publication, a formal presentation, letters, etc. However, it is important that the reporting method delivers the findings to the appropriate individuals involved in the decision making process and those who will be affected by the outcomes of the redevelopment.

**Monitoring and Evaluation.** Finally, the sixth step follows up the HIA process to determine whether the recommendations were implemented and if they had an effect on the final policy decision. This step further evaluates the decision to identify whether the recommendations had an impact on the health of the community. Over the long term, this step of the HIA monitors health outcomes to evaluate the impacts of the recommendations. This is an important part of an HIA, as outlined in the “Minimum Elements and Practice Standards for Health Impact Assessments” (Bhatia, Farhang, Heller, Lee, Orenstein, Richardson, and Wernham, 2014). This step is crucial in ensuring that the recommendations lead to positive health outcomes through policy changes or program implementations.

## **Health Equity**

Health equity is a concept that provides a framework for many HIAs. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),

Health equity is achieved when every person has the opportunity to “attain his or her full health potential” and no one is “disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances” (“Health Equity”, 2013).

Health equity exists when there are no disparities in health. The term “equity” is used instead of “equality” because individuals may require different resources to be healthy, therefore resources do not need to be distributed equally to ensure equal health outcomes. Health equity is affected by many social factors, including education, employment, age, race, gender, environment and more (Harris, Harris-Roxas, Harris, & Kemp). Individuals that are disadvantaged due to disparities in income, housing, education, environment, and access to resources can experience worse health outcomes. When health inequities are present in a community, differences in quality of life, rate of disease, and access to treatment will exist. Inequity also reflects a failure to overcome inequalities that exist in a society (“Equity”, 2014). Healthy People 2020 states that,

Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities” (“Defining Health Equity”, 2014).

Certain structures in a community, including the built environment, can result in health inequities for the residents of that area. It is important to address the causes of the disparities that exist in a community to improve health equity. Addressing root causes, many of which exist in the built environment, can support health equity within a community.

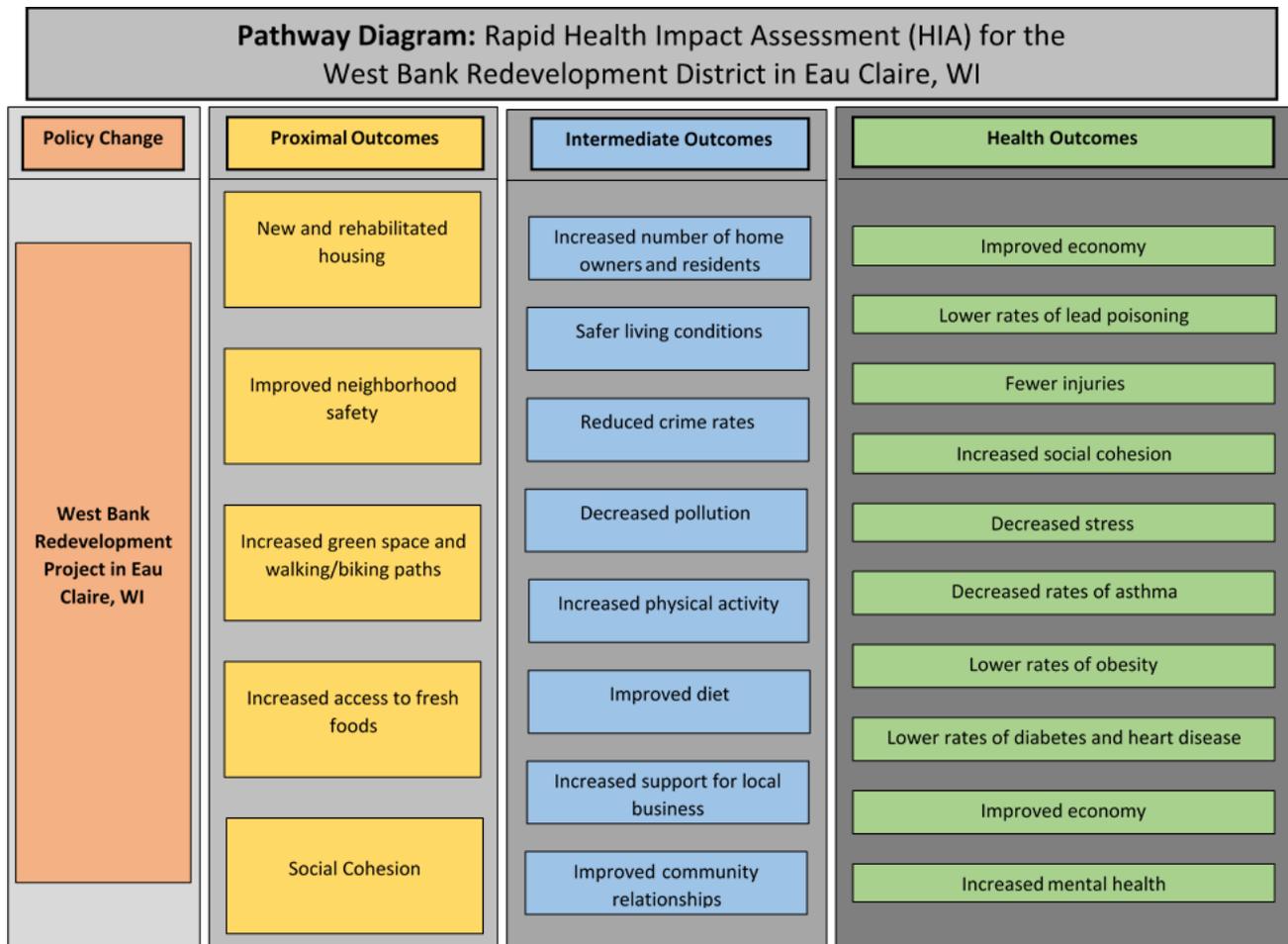
### **West Bank Redevelopment HIA Step 1: Screening**

Using the steps of an HIA and a focus of Health Equity, a rapid Health Impact Assessment was conducted for the West Bank Redevelopment Project. A rapid HIA assesses up to three health impacts and is typically completed by one person in a 6-12 week time period (Harris, Harris-Roxas, Harris, & Kemp). For this project, the rapid HIA collected qualitative and quantitative data specific to the West Bank Redevelopment Project through a variety of methods. This project was completed between August and December 2014. A rapid HIA can feasibly be conducted in that time period while a full HIA takes much longer. Regardless of the length, the HIA provides value to the redevelopment project through the recommendations. The recommendations provide suggestions on how the project can improve health outcomes for the community and reduce potential negative impacts through the redevelopment. If taken into consideration, the HIA and the recommendations can influence the redevelopment project and facilitate health equity for the community. Furthermore, several key stakeholders have been identified. Ned Noel is a City Planner in Eau Claire who has been involved in planning the redevelopment and has in-depth knowledge of the city. Shane Sanderson, Environmental Health Director, and Lieske Giese, Director-Health Officer, at the Eau Claire City-County Health Department both have significant knowledge of Eau Claire and the health of the residents. Paula Tran Inzeo is the Assistant Director at the UW Madison Center for Nonprofit and Community Services. She served as an advisor for the rapid HIA. Each of these individuals are important contributors to the rapid HIA and were on the steering committee for the project.

### **West Bank Redevelopment HIA Step 2: Scoping**

The scoping stage of an HIA establishes the goals and the anticipated outcomes of the project. For the West Bank Redevelopment, there are many different indicators of health that could be studied. These include housing, access to medical care, access to fresh foods, public transportation, social cohesion, air and water quality, neighborhood safety, crime, green space and parks, bike and walking trails, access to job opportunities, industrial pollution, landscaping, aesthetic design, and more.

However, this HIA focuses on 5 key areas: housing, green space and trails, neighborhood safety and crime, access to fresh foods, and social cohesion. These 5 areas are tangible, reasonable to address, and will likely to have the most widespread health impacts for the community. These focus areas were emphasized during many phases of the HIA, specifically throughout pieces of the assessment stage. The 5 theme areas were identified based on broad literature and were reinforced by feedback from stakeholders. This prompted specific questions during key informant interviews, which strengthened the main areas of concentration that were identified. This was an iterative process in which the literature identified potential areas of focus and the key areas were chosen and grounded in feedback from stakeholders. These 5 areas were used to identify potential health impacts. They also addressed healthy inequity in the West Bank community. The pathway diagram below outlines how changes to each of these 5 areas can potentially affect health outcomes in the community. In this diagram, the



West Bank Redevelopment is the policy change that will occur. Based on this change, proximal outcomes such as new and rehabilitated housing and increased access to fresh foods are anticipated. These proximal outcomes will create intermediate outcomes such as safe, affordable housing and improved diets. Finally, it can be reasonably concluded that these outcomes will result in various positive health impacts for the West Bank community. These include decreased risk of fires and infectious disease, reduced rates of stress, and reduced rates of obesity.

There are multiple outcomes that could result from changes to the built environment. This HIA researched these redevelopment options and potential outcomes to determine the likely potential health impacts from redevelopment. The process studied alternative redevelopment options and the effect on health equity. The HIA provides recommendations on how to reduce potential negative

outcomes and encourage positive health impacts. The table below demonstrates the research questions that were studied for each area.

<b>Health Determinants in the West Bank District</b>			
<b>Focus Area</b>	<b>Existing Conditions Research Questions</b>	<b>Impact Research Questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>Housing</b>	How affordable are current housing options? How safe is the current housing?	Will the redevelopment meet the housing needs of current and future residents in availability, affordability, and safety?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renter vs. owner-occupied housing</li> <li>• Safety of homes (defects and lead)</li> <li>• Socio-economic status of residents</li> </ul>
<b>Green space and trails</b>	How many trails are currently in the area? What is the quality and size of park space?	Will the redevelopment increase physical activity opportunities for residents in the community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of trails</li> <li>• Existing park space</li> <li>• Quality and accessibility of green space</li> </ul>
<b>Neighborhood safety</b>	What is the current crime rate? What types of crime are most prevalent? What physical factors either prevent or promote crime? What is the community perception of crime?	Will the redevelopment address crime and improve neighborhood safety?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of crimes</li> <li>• Neighborhood safety features such as lighting, fences, and other design elements</li> <li>• Crime prevention programs</li> <li>• Resident perception</li> </ul>
<b>Access to fresh foods</b>	Are there grocery stores, community gardens, or public/farmers' markets in the area? Is fresh food accessible, available, and affordable?	Will the redevelopment facilitate easy and affordable access to fresh foods for the residents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grocery stores in the neighborhood or nearby</li> <li>• Prices and availability of fresh foods</li> <li>• Public/farmers' markets and community gardens</li> </ul>
<b>Social cohesion</b>	Are there places for the community to gather? Is there a neighborhood association?	Will the redevelopment encourage community gathering and promote relationship building between residents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and quality of places for residents to gather (community centers, plazas, restaurants/bars, art venues, etc.)</li> <li>• Neighborhood associations</li> </ul>

To evaluate the potential health impacts, the rapid HIA reviewed existing data, conducted a media analysis, and engaged various stakeholders through key informant interviews. Each step of the rapid HIA was reviewed by the steering committee and feedback was incorporated. The final report will

be presented to the City of Eau Claire, including community development and health department staff, in addition to others that have a stake in the redevelopment. The assessment plan below outlines the steps that were taken, the data sources that were used, the intended outcomes of each process, and the timeline in which this project was completed.

<b>Assessment Plan: Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) for the West Bank Redevelopment District in Eau Claire, WI</b>						
<b>HIA Step</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Data Type</b>	<b>Data Source(s)</b>	<b>Analytical Plan</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Step 1: Screening</b>	<b>West Bank Redevelopment Project Information</b>	Information and data related to the redevelopment project will be gathered in order to provide reference information regarding the project plans.	Information will include all current and past plans and recommendations	Published plans and websites containing redevelopment information, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West Riverside District Plan</li> <li>West Bank (Oxford Avenue) Redevelopment District website</li> <li>Eau Claire Health Chapter Comprehensive Plan</li> </ul>	Information will be used to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain current status of redevelopment project</li> <li>Determine how current plans may affect health outcomes</li> <li>Inform project recommendations</li> </ul>	Completed by Oct. 16
	<b>Pathway diagrams</b>	Will develop 2-3 visual depictions of how factors in the built environment can lead to specific health outcomes.	Will use multiple types of data gathered through the literature review (details below)	CDC, APA, Human Impact Partners, and computerized databases (ex: PubMed)	These diagrams will assist in clarifying the link between changes in the built environment (through the redevelopment project) and potential health outcomes due to those changes	Completed by Sept. 30
<b>Steps 2 and 3: Scoping and Assessment</b>	<b>Eau Claire Statistics</b>	Will gather data specific to Eau Claire and the 54703 zip code area in order to provide a baseline for the rapid HIA and recommendations.	Data to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socio-economic data</li> <li>Health data</li> <li>Resources</li> <li>Built environment</li> </ul>	Websites including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Eau Claire Health Department</li> <li>Eau Claire County</li> </ul> Published documents including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2013 Eau Claire Annual Report</li> <li>Eau Claire Health Assessment 2013</li> <li>Eau Claire Health Chapter Comprehensive Plan</li> </ul>	Information will be used to determine current status of West Bank area including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socio-economic status</li> <li>Health status</li> <li>Access to resources</li> </ul> Information will also be used to determine areas of need.	Completed by Oct. 16
	<b>Literature Review</b>	This literature review will synthesize existing research on built environment and health. It will also draw from published articles and similar HIAs in order to make the link between factors in the built environment and related health outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing literature reviews that synthesize research done on built environment and health</li> <li>Articles published in peer reviewed journals within the last 10 years</li> <li>Published HIAs</li> </ul>	CDC, APA, Human Impact Partners, and computerized databases (ex: PubMed)	Sources will be reviewed and summarized in order to explain studies and research that have made the link between changes in the built environment and the effect on health outcomes. Similar HIAs will be used to examine past successes and challenges in order to inform project recommendations.	Completed by Oct. 9

<b>Steps 2 and 3: Scoping and Assessment</b>	<b>Media Analysis</b>	The media analysis will search media source focusing specifically on the West Bank Redevelopment Project in order to learn about the public perceptions.	Existing media sources from the past 5 years that specifically address the redevelopment project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Articles (print and online)</li> <li>• Meeting minutes</li> </ul>	Internet search	Sources will be reviewed and examined to determine community viewpoints and perceptions of the redevelopment project.	Completed by Oct. 23
	<b>Key Informant Interviews</b>	3-5 interviews will be done with key individuals related to the redevelopment project in order to provide unique opinions and perspectives from individuals involved within the community.	Interviews will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Eau Claire Health Department employee</li> <li>• City Planner</li> <li>• Government official</li> <li>• Redevelopment project planner</li> <li>• Public health professionals who has completed a similar HIA</li> </ul>	Key informants will be identified through current contacts	Information gathered from interviews will be used to ascertain community members' perspectives on the redevelopment project. Interviewing multiple people will provide several unique perspectives, experiences, and opinions. The feedback will be used in conjunction with other data to produce the recommendations.	Completed by Oct. 23
<b>Step 3: Assessment</b>	<b>Project Map</b>	Will create 1-3 maps indicating existing community resources in order to create baseline visual. Will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community resources</li> <li>• Health care</li> <li>• Fresh food</li> <li>• Bike and walking paths</li> </ul>	Will utilize existing maps and area descriptions to compile multiple information sources into single maps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google maps</li> <li>• West Riverside District Plan</li> <li>• West Bank (Oxford Avenue) Redevelopment District website</li> <li>• Eau Claire Health Chapter Comprehensive Plan</li> <li>• Internet search</li> </ul>	The maps will be used to illustrate the need for specific resources within the community. The maps will be used to inform recommendations to assist the redevelopment in improving access to these resources.	Completed by Nov. 6
<b>Step 4: Recommendations</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	Based off the research, will create recommendations for the redevelopment project in order to facilitate positive health outcomes through the redevelopment.	Multiple data types will be used to inform the recommendations, including quantitative and qualitative data sources.	Recommendations will be based off of information collected from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redevelopment project information</li> <li>• Eau Claire statistics</li> <li>• Built environment and health research</li> <li>• Media analysis</li> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> </ul>	After each research piece has been analyzed, the information gathered will be used to develop recommendations for the redevelopment project. The recommendations will provide suggestions to facilitate positive health outcomes through changes to the built environment.	Completed by Oct. 30
<b>Step 5: Reporting</b>	<b>Policy Brief</b>	The policy brief will deliver a summarized description of the redevelopment plan, the recommendations made through the rapid HIA, and potential unintended outcomes of the	All pieces of the reporting stage will be informed by Steps 1 through 3 of the rapid HIA. This will include baseline information completed during the screening stage, research done during the	All aspects of the reporting stage will utilize the data sources that were used in Steps 1 through 4 (above). No new data sources will be used.	N/A	Completed by Nov. 6

		current redevelopment plans. The policy brief will highlight the rationale for recommendations and provide incentive for action.	scoping stage, and analysis done during the assessment stage. Each piece will also include recommendations from Step 4 and the HIA report will include Step 6: Evaluation.			
	<b>Community Brief</b>	The community brief will provide a summary of the rapid HIA and its results. This can be used to present the project to the public in language and wording that is easily understood.				Completed by Nov. 6
	<b>HIA Report</b>	A final, comprehensive report will be developed including all steps of the rapid HIA. The report will outline the need for the HIA, research that was completed, data analysis and assessment of the research, recommendations made, and next steps for implementation and evaluation.				Completed by Nov. 20
	<b>HIA Presentation</b>	The policy brief, community brief, and final HIA Report will be presented to the City of Eau Claire, including all related key stakeholders. The presentation will explain the steps of the HIA, how each step was completed, and what was discovered. The presentation will emphasize the recommendations and the reasoning behind the recommendations.				Completed by Dec. 4
<b>Step 6: Evaluation</b>	<b>Evaluation Plan</b>	Will develop an evaluation plan outline for the City of Eau Claire to utilize in monitoring the outcomes of the redevelopment. This will include recommended assessment measures and specific indicators of evaluation.	Will use existing project evaluations and similar HIAs to inform recommended evaluation measures.	Data will be drawn from existing HIAs (researched in Step 2) and other project evaluations.	N/A	Completed by Nov. 6

### **West Bank Redevelopment HIA Step 3: Assessment**

There were two parts to the assessment step of the HIA. First, this stage gathered existing data to provide a baseline of health conditions and health determinants within the West Bank District. Second, this stage assessed the potential impacts of the redevelopment plan on these health outcomes and determinants. More specifically, Step 3 looked at various qualitative and quantitative data sources to provide a standard understanding of the relationship between the built environment and public health. It also explains data specific to the City of Eau Claire. This includes demographics and statistics on health, economics, and resources in the area. Furthermore, the assessment step describes the media analysis and how this information enhanced the overall HIA. It explains which media pieces were chosen and how they augmented the data found through other types of research methods. Finally, this section explains the key informant interviews. It clarifies how many interviews were done as well as who was interviewed and why. This section provides both quantitative and qualitative data sources and analyzes how the redevelopment plan may potentially impact the West Bank District. For a successful HIA, both research data as well as community perspective are important in forming recommendations for the Redevelopment Project. This section explains how each piece of data enhanced the HIA process and how the current redevelopment plans may affect the health outcomes of the community as well as how changes to the redevelopment could have potentially different outcomes.

#### **Existing Data**

There is a significant amount of existing data that can contribute to the rapid HIA of the West Bank Redevelopment District. This includes published literature explaining the relationship between health and the built environment as well as demographics and data specific to the Eau Claire West Bank data that highlights both assets and problems within the community. Gathering this existing data helped lay the foundation for redevelopment project and assisted in clarifying how positive health outcomes can be facilitated through recommendations to the project.

**Literature Review: Built Environment and the Impacts on Public Health.** There is a substantial amount of current research and published resources that highlight the relationship between the built environment and the potential impact on the health of a community. A literature review was conducted in order to identify and explain this relationship. This information makes a solid, evidence-based case for how implementing changes to the built environment of a community can positively or negatively impact the health outcomes of that community.

Very simply, the built environment is the physical environment that is constructed or altered by humans. This can include the construction of buildings and homes, landscaping of grass, trees, and parks, and the development of streets, sidewalks, and paths. This can also include other infrastructures such as public transportation, water purification, and sewer systems. The built environment is where residents work, live, and interact with each other. It has a significant impact on daily life and public health outcomes.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has an initiative called “Healthy Community Design”. The series of fact sheets describe how aspects of the built environment affect the health outcomes in a community. The initiative explains that making certain changes to the built environment can make it easier for residents to lead healthier lives. The idea behind healthy community design is making the healthy choice the easy choice. In this type of community, residents have the opportunity to make healthy choices in every aspect of their lives. A variety of healthy options should be available, accessible and affordable (“Designing and Building Healthy Places”, 2006). By utilizing a healthy community design, a community can improve air quality, encourage physical activity through walking and biking, promote social cohesion within the community, decrease stress for residents, reduce pollution, and guarantee access to fresh foods and other necessary resources. These aspects will in turn produce long-term health outcomes such as decreased rates of chronic disease, reduced rates of injury, and lower levels of mental health issues. The CDC explains that in order to create a health community,

there are several principles to follow. This includes developing walking and biking paths that are safe and accessible, constructing parks and green space, ensuring affordable housing for all residents, and facilitating access to fresh foods through grocery stores and farmers' markets ("Healthy Community Design", 2008). The CDC's initiative clarifies that a community's redevelopment should consider how children, older adults, and people with disabilities interact with the environment. The design should be nurturing for children and accessible for older adults and people with a disability. Aspects of the built environment can potentially make it difficult for these populations to participate in the community and access essential resources.

There are several explicit ways in which the built environment directly impacts health outcomes. One of these is physical activity. Many people rely on their environment to provide opportunities to engage in physical activity. This often consists of trails for biking, sidewalks for walking or running, and parks and fields for playing sports such as basketball, baseball, football, or soccer. If the built environment does not include these features, the residents may not have any options for engaging in physical activity. This is especially true in lower income neighborhoods where residents cannot afford a membership to a gym or recreational center. A lack of physical activity can result in a number of negative health outcomes for individuals, including obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. If the built environment does not support easy access to physical activity, the residents may suffer from these poor health outcomes. However, through healthy community design, a neighborhood can encourage physical activity through walking paths, usable sidewalks, green space and parks, bike paths, and proximity of the home to work, shops, and recreation ("Health Issues Related to Community Design", 2007).

Another way that the built environment directly affects health is through the availability and quality of housing. Homes built before 1978 often contain lead in the paint and pipes. Exposure to lead can lead to various health outcomes, specifically for children and pregnant women. Children who are exposed to lead are more likely to experience behavior and learning problems, lower IQ, and slowed

growth. Pregnant women can suffer from premature birth if exposed to lead before or during pregnancy. There are ways to reduce lead exposure in homes through abatement methods such as paint inspections and risk assessments. However, if older homes are not maintained or treated for lead hazards, the risk for lead poisoning increases. ("Lead", 2014). Older homes that are not maintained also have an increased risk for defects, which could result in injuries or exposure to allergens or mold for the residents. Older, unmaintained homes are also at a greater risk for fires and carbon monoxide poisoning (Cohen, 2011). In addition to this, housing also affects health through availability and affordability. The Center for Housing Policy published a research summary that explained that affordable housing can allow individuals to spend more money on nutritious food and health care, resulting in better health outcomes. Affordable and stable housing can also reduce stress and decrease mental health issues. If an individual does not have to worry about making enough money to cover rent or possible foreclosure, they are likely to experience lower levels of stress due to housing. Stable housing also ensures that residents can remain in the home for a long period of time, so that individuals do not have to deal with the stress of frequent moves (Cohen, 2011). The CDC's Healthy Community Design recommends that a redevelopment also address the potential for gentrification. While a redevelopment can produce a variety of positive outcomes, current residents with a lower socio-economic status have the potential of being displaced. This can result in health disparities for that population. It is important to address this potential outcome during the planning stages of the redesign ("Health Issues Related to Community Design", 2007).

Access to fresh foods is another way in which the built environment directly affects the health outcomes of the community. A poor diet can lead to negative health outcomes such as low nutrition, obesity, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, stroke and other chronic conditions ("Health Effects of Limited Access to Healthy Food: Obesity, Chronic Disease, and Poor Nutrition", 2010). Access to fresh food means that there is a store in the neighborhood that sells fruits and vegetables, not just packaged and

processed foods. Moreover, access to fresh food also means that individuals can afford these healthy options (“Healthy Food Access”, 2014). If there are not available and affordable healthy food options, individuals are more likely to buy processed, packaged foods that result in a poor diet and lead to negative health consequences. The built environment can support healthy eating by providing a variety of fresh food options at reasonable prices. This can be done through a traditional grocery store, a public market, farmers’ markets, or community gardens.

In addition, neighborhood safety within the built environment also directly affects health. Whether crime in the neighborhood actually exists or it is perceived by the residents, it can affect their health regardless. If an individual does not feel safe going outside in their neighborhood, they will be less likely to engage in outdoor physical activity. This can cause increased obesity for residents. Furthermore, injury may result if crime in the community is violent or aggressive. Finally, crime within a neighborhood is likely to increase stress levels for many of the residents. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources, children living in households with incomes below the poverty level were significantly more likely to report that they felt unsafe in their neighborhood (“Perceived Neighborhood Safety”, 2010). Low income neighborhoods are more likely to have higher crime rates and experience more negative health outcomes as a result. This again illustrates the health inequities that exist in disadvantaged areas.

Finally, social aspects of the neighborhood can affect the health of the community. According to an article published by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation,

Residents of “close-knit” neighborhoods may be more likely to work together to achieve common goals, to exchange information, and to maintain informal social controls, all of which can directly or indirectly influence health. Children in more closely-knit neighborhoods are...less likely to engage in health-damaging behaviors like smoking, drinking, drug use or gang involvement. Neighborhoods in which residents express mutual trust and share a willingness to

intervene for the public good have been linked with lower homicide rates. Conversely, less closely-knit neighborhoods and greater degrees of social disorder have been related to anxiety and depression (“Where We Live Matters for Our Health: Neighborhoods and Health”, 2008).

This illustrates how important it is for the built environment to support social cohesion within the community. Gathering places such as churches, schools, restaurants, theaters, and community centers can bring people together and encourage social cohesion. By creating opportunities for community members to come together, the built environment can reduce the potential negative health outcomes that can result from isolation.

A contributor to poor health outcomes that is often overlooked is stress. Each of the built environment factors explained above can result in higher levels of stress. Stress often affects lower income neighborhoods disproportionately. Stress can be impacted by unemployment, low income, lack of access to resources such as health care and fresh foods, lack of physical activity, and high rates of crime within the community. Experiencing a high amount of stress can lead to a number of negative health effects for individuals. According to Roy and Riley in “Transforming Communities to Reduce Stress and Improve Health”,

Stressed individuals engage in less healthy behaviors: eating more unhealthy foods, exercising less, smoking more, and sleeping less than their less stressed counterparts...The persistent assault of low-grade stressors, such as air and noise pollution, constant rush, lack of nature, and social isolation repeatedly trigger our bodies’ stress responses, promote low-level inflammation, and subsequently undermine our cardiovascular health” (Roy and Riley, 2014).

Unfortunately, features of the built environment can exacerbate these stressors and worsen these negative health outcomes. For example, neighborhoods with high crime and violence rates have higher stress levels. In neighborhoods with high levels of crime, residents may not feel safe being outside, which may lessen their amount of physical activity. Additionally, if individuals cannot access suitable

employment opportunities, they may experience stress over low income, lack of insurance, and time management. Individuals might not be able to afford fresh foods, visit a primary care doctor, or have time for physical activity. This, in turn, can lead to poor health outcomes that are not being addressed. However, community redevelopments can address these sources of stress and attempt to mitigate them through intentional efforts in community design (Roy and Riley, 2014).

According to the CDC, “public health challenges like asthma, motor vehicle-related injuries, obesity, and heart disease are directly related to how communities are designed and built” (“CDC’s Built Environment and Health Initiative”, 2013). The CDC also explains that

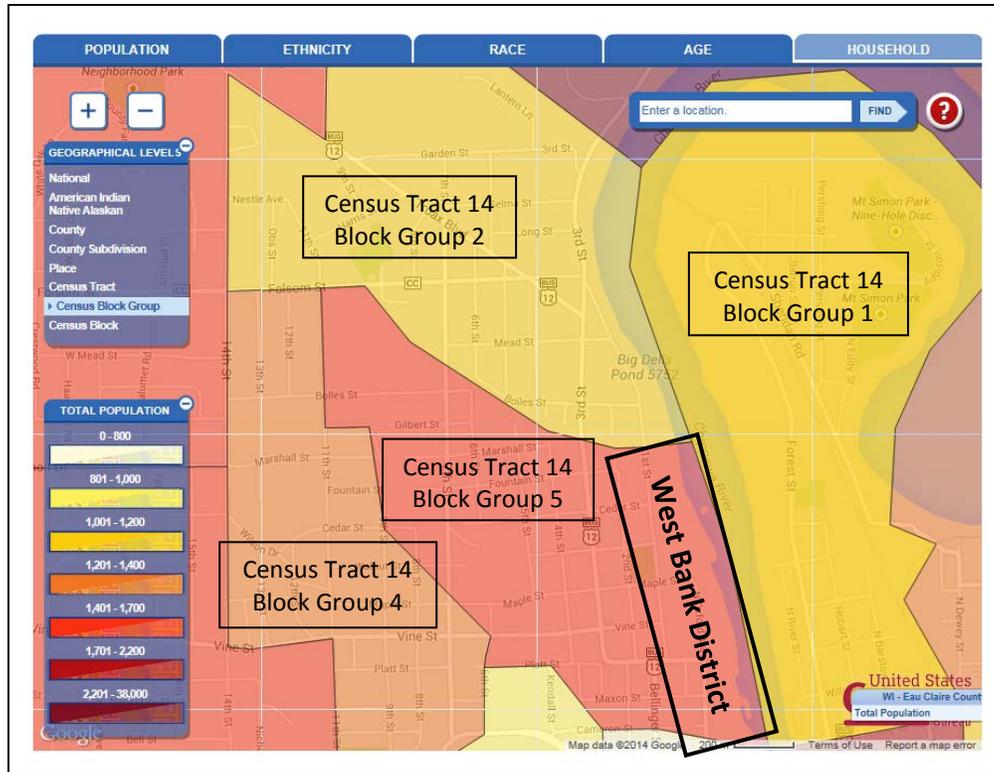
Since 1900, life expectancy in the United States has increased by approximately 40 years. Only 7 of those years can be attributed to improvements in disease care; the rest are the result of improved prevention efforts and improved environmental conditions, including sanitation and water. The link between the nation’s health and the environment is unmistakable... Examining the interaction between health and the environment requires studying how health is directly affected by various chemical, physical, and biologic agents. We must also consider the effects of factors in the broad physical and social environments, which include housing, urban development, land use, transportation, industry, and agriculture. (“Designing and Building Healthy Places”, 2006).

Through healthy community design, planners can make considerations around these potential outcomes and create a redevelopment that reduces potential negative health impacts and encourages positive health impacts. Through a redevelopment, a community can encourage access to a healthy diet, reduce socio-economic disparities, ensure affordable housing, promote physical activity, and develop social cohesion. The CDC explains that one tool that can help inform this process is an HIA. An HIA assists planners in considering health outcomes when making decisions about redevelopment (“Tools to Assess Health Impacts of Land-Use Policies and Programs”, 2008). Simon and Fielding expand in this notion in

“Establishing Best Practices for Changing the Built Environment”. They explain that redevelopment projects should engage a wide variety of stakeholders including health departments, neighborhood associations, elected officials, planners, and residents. This allows the redevelopment to meet the needs of the community. Furthermore, this input should be substantiated by community statistics and education. It is important for an HIA to incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data along with community input to inform a redevelopment (Simon and Fielding, 2009).

**Eau Claire West Bank Data: Demographics.** Demographic information specific to the West Bank neighborhood is not available. However, there are several data sources that provide demographic data relevant to the West Bank area. The West Riverside District Plan includes a demographic profile for a larger redevelopment area that includes the West Bank District. It is reasonable to conclude that the demographic information for the West Bank area is similar to the larger district. According to the District Plan, the population of the West Riverside District is 2,192 people with approximately 988 households. The West Riverside District has a household income that is approximately 68% of that for Eau Claire. Furthermore, this area has a significantly higher number of households with annual incomes that fall below the federally-defined poverty level (“West Riverside District Plan,” 2011).

2010 Census data also provides demographic data relevant to the West Bank District. The West Bank area is located in Census Tract 14 and Block Group 5. Data is not available for the block level. However, the West Bank area makes up about a quarter of Block Group 5 and it is reasonable to conclude that the data for this block group is similar to that of the West Bank specifically. The map below illustrates where the West Bank falls into Block Group 5.



(“2010 Census Interactive Population Map”, 2011)

According to 2010 Census Data, Block Group 5 has a population of 1,421 individuals. The charts below demonstrate the gender, age, and race/ethnicity breakdown for this population and the comparison data for the city of Eau Claire.

Gender and Age Data 2010				
Gender and Age	Census Tract 14 – Block Group 5		Eau Claire, WI	
	Total population: 1,421		Total population: 65,883	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Male	724	51.0%	31,921	48.5%
Female	697	49.0%	33,962	51.5%
Under 18	300	21.1%	12,728	19.3%
18 and over	1,121	78.9%	53,155	80.7%
20-24	193	13.6%	10,827	16.4%
25-34	335	23.6%	9,785	24.6%
35-49	242	17.0%	10,365	15.7%
50-64	211	14.8%	10,611	16.1%
65 and over	97	6.8%	7,680	11.7%

(“2010 Census Interactive Population Map”, 2011)

<b>Race/Ethnicity Data 2010</b>				
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Census Tract 14 – Block Group 5</b>		<b>Eau Claire, WI</b>	
	<b>Total population: 1,421</b>		<b>Total population: 65,883</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>White</b>	1,230	86.6%	60,226	91.4%
<b>Asian</b>	78	5.5%	3,014	4.6%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	48	3.4%	1,268	1.9%
<b>African American</b>	33	2.3%	752	1.1%
<b>American Indian/ Alaska Native</b>	11	0.8%	347	0.5%
<b>Multi-racial</b>	55	3.9%	1,159	1.8%
<b>Other</b>	14	1.0%	356	0.5%

(“2010 Census Interactive Population Map”, 2011)

As these graphs show, the gender and age breakdown for Census Block Group 5 are very similar to that of the City of Eau Claire. Most of the age groups are roughly the same percentage for both Block Group 5 and Eau Claire. However, Block Group 5 only has 6.8% of the population that is 65 years of age and older. This is compared to 11.7% of the population in Eau Claire as a whole. While the age and gender comparisons are similar, the breakdown of race/ethnicity highlights some differences between Block Group 5 and the City of Eau Claire. Block Group 5 has 13.4% non-white residents, whereas only 8.6% of the Eau Claire population is non-white. Block Group 5 has a higher percentage of minority populations, including 5.5% Asian, 3.4% Hispanic, 2.3% African American, and 3.9% multi-racial. While these are not large percentages, the variances in numbers highlight the differences in this area (“2010 Census Interactive Population Map”, 2011).

Data from the United States Census also provides estimates for the average per capita income, educational attainment, and employment status for residents living in Block Group 5 of Census Tract 14. The chart below highlights these figures.

<b>Census Tract 14 – Block Group 5 Data</b>		
	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Estimate</b>
<b>Income</b>	Per capita income in the past 12 months (in 2013 inflation-adjusted dollars)	\$22,276
	Income in the past 12 months below poverty level	22.5%
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	No Diploma	2.6%

<b>(for the population age 25 years and older)</b>	Regular High School Diploma	34.1%
	GED or Alternative	5.4%
	Some College, No Degree	18.7%
	Associate's Degree	19.7%
	Bachelor's Degree	14.1%
	Master's Degree	5.4%
<b>Employment Status (in the past 12 months for the population ages 16-64 years)</b>	Employed	92.7%
	Employed Full Time (Male)	73.8%
	Employed Part Time (Male)	26.2%
	Employed Full Time (Female)	74.8%
	Employed Part Time (Female)	25.2%
	Unemployed	7.3%

(“American FactFinder”, 2014)

As the table demonstrates, a large percentage of the population lives below the poverty level. This is further illustrated by the average per capita income, which is \$22,276. Furthermore, 58.2% of the population does not have a college degree. This can make it difficult to find a job and a livable wage. As the table shows, 92.7% of the population is employed, but approximately one quarter of the employed population is not employed full time (“American FactFinder”, 2014). Again, this can result in a lower income. Additionally, if an individual is employed part-time, they are unlikely to receive medical or dental insurance through their employer. This can affect their access to preventive health and dental care, which can result in worse health outcomes in the future. Moreover, a low income can also mean a higher level of stress due to restricted housing options and limited affordable food options. All of these things can result in poor health outcomes for people who have a lower socio-economic status (Roy and Riley, 2014).

**Eau Claire West Bank Data: Housing.** The West Riverside District Plan also included some information about housing in the area. According to the report, the West Riverside District has a lower percentage of owner-occupied and single family homes and a higher rate of duplexes, compared to the rest of the city. Finally, the median value of homes in the West Riverside District is one-half to two-thirds that of the entire city (“West Riverside District Plan,” 2011). In addition to this information, 2010

Census Data also included some information on housing. Again, this data is specific to Block Group 5.

The chart below compares the housing data in Block Group 5 to the City of Eau Claire as a whole.

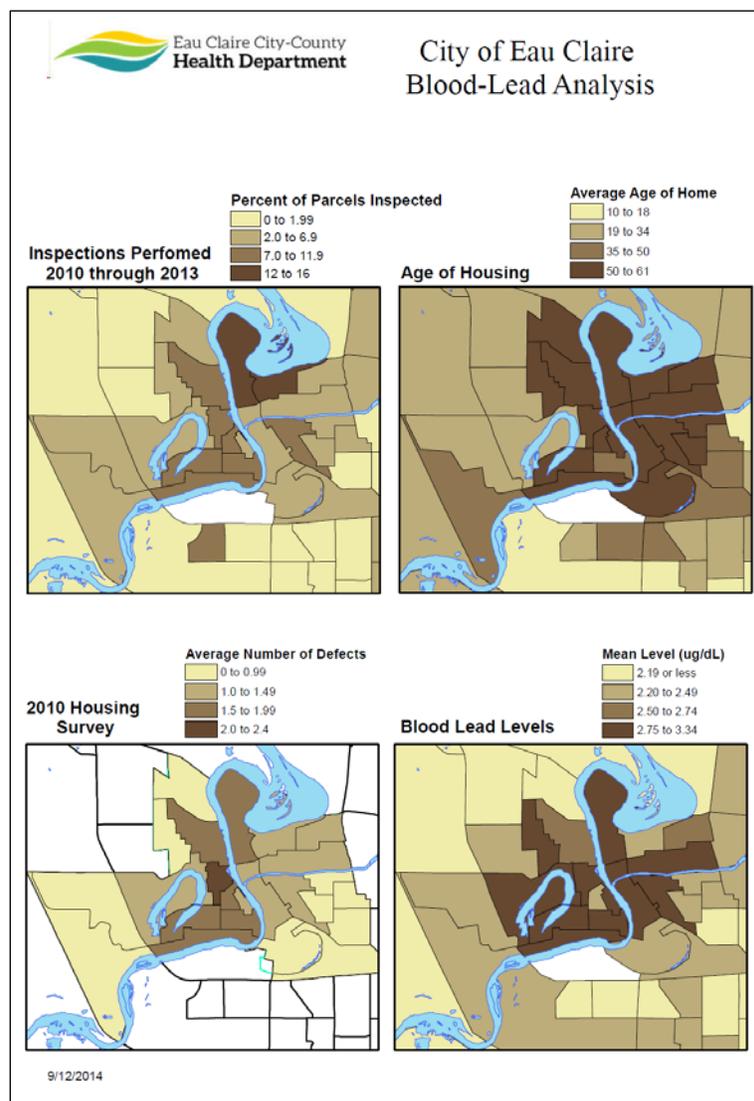
<b>Housing Data 2010</b>				
<b>Housing</b>	<b>Census Tract 14 – Block Group 5</b>		<b>Eau Claire, WI</b>	
	<b>Total housing: 714</b>		<b>Total housing: 28,134</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Occupied Housing</b>	664	93.0%	26,803	95.3%
<b>Owner-occupied</b>	321	48.3%	14,779	55.1%
<b>Renter-occupied</b>	343	51.7%	12,024	44.9%
<b>Housing with Minors</b>	165	24.8%	6,852	25.6%
<b>Vacant Housing</b>	50	7.0%	1,331	4.7%
<b>For Rent</b>	13	26.0%	518	39.0%
<b>For Sale</b>	10	20%	270	20.3%

(“2010 Census Interactive Population Map”, 2011)

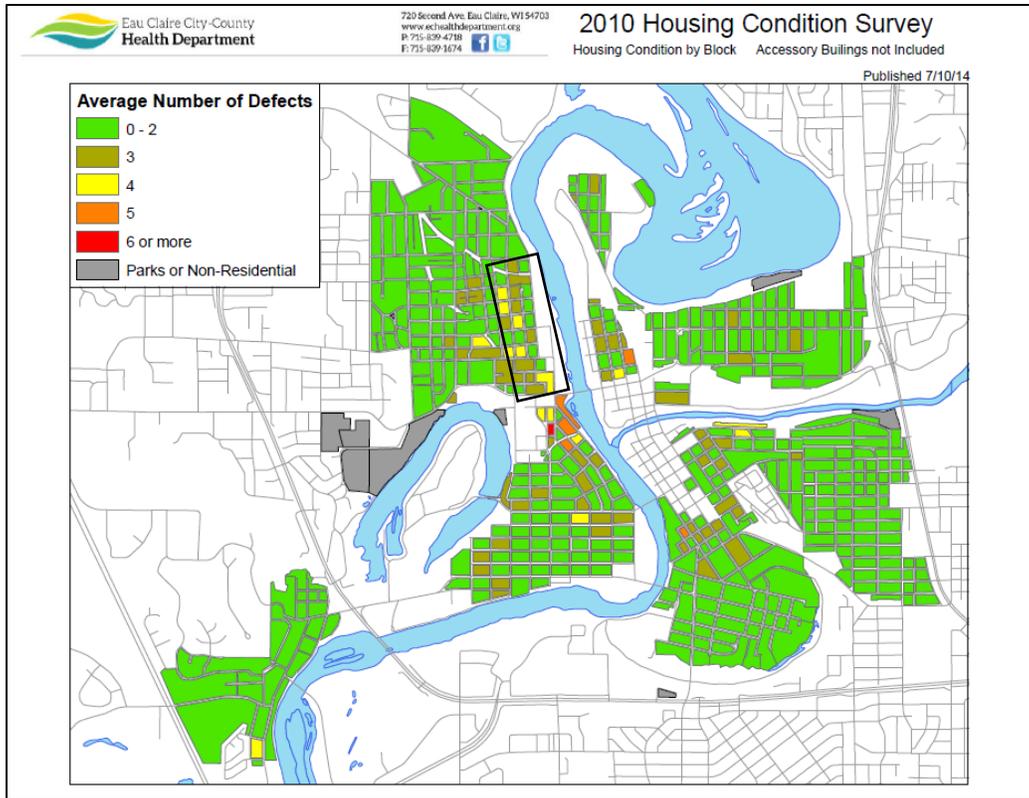
As this graphs illustrates, Block Group 5 has a lower percentage of occupied housing and owner-occupied homes as compared to Eau Claire. Conversely, Block Group 5 has a higher percentage of renter-occupied housing. Furthermore, the chart demonstrates that there is a higher percentage of vacant housing in Block Group 5, with a lower percentage of homes for rent or for sale when compared to the City of Eau Claire (“2010 Census Interactive Population Map”, 2011).

In addition to a higher rate of renter-occupied housing and a lower median value of homes in the area, the West Bank also has a disproportionate number of housing problems. As the maps below demonstrate, a larger number of home inspections were conducted in the West Bank area in 2010 as compared to other neighborhoods throughout Eau Claire. The high number of housing problems can likely be contributed to the large number of older houses in the area (as depicted below). The map in the lower left corner below exemplifies the higher number of home defects identified in the West Bank area (“City of Eau Claire Blood-Lead Analysis”, 2014). This is substantiated by the two following maps, each depicting the elevated amount of housing defects in the community as compared to most of the city. This is also due to the lack of upkeep done on the houses, which is often true of renter-occupied

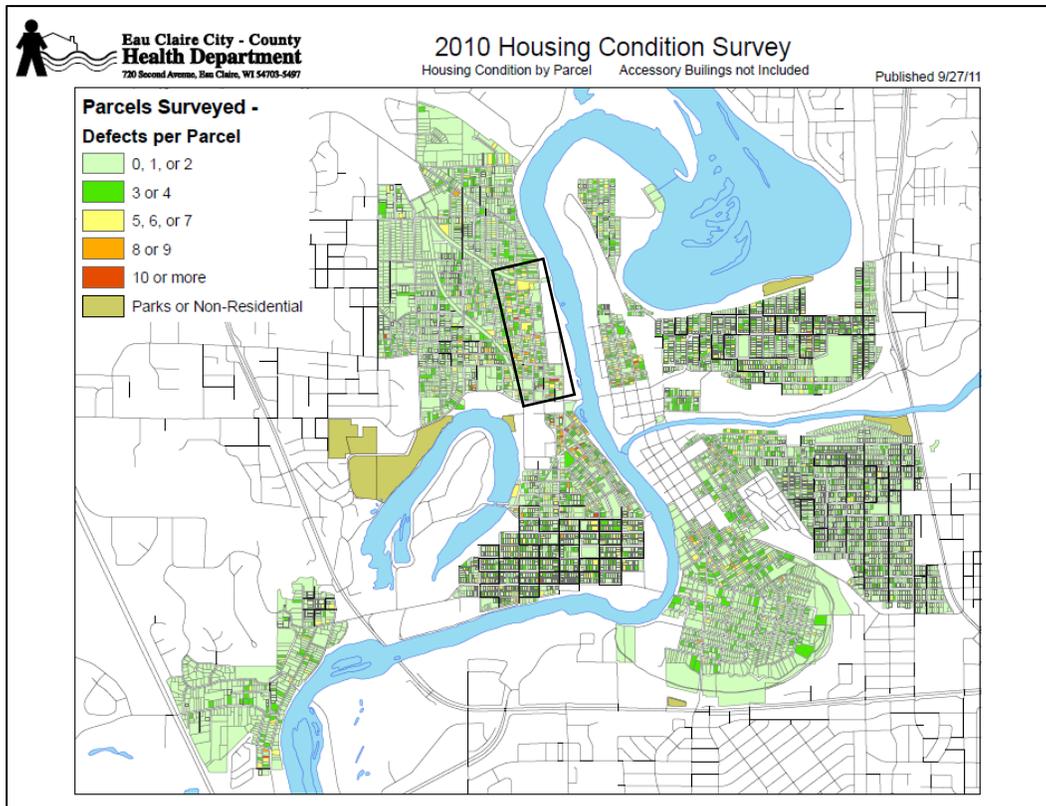
homes (“Average Number of Defects”, 2014; “Parcels Surveyed – Defects per Parcel”, 2011). Finally, the map in the lower right corner below highlights the high quantity of blood lead levels identified in the West Bank community. Again, this can likely be contributed to the older age of home and lack of upkeep. 63.6% of homes in Block Group 5 were built in 1939 or earlier (“American FactFinder”, 2014). As explained in the literature review, exposure to lead can result in premature birth and learning disabilities and problems with growth among children (“Lead”, 2014). As this data shows, the West Bank District is experiencing disproportionate housing problems compared to the entire City of Eau Claire.



(“City of Eau Claire Blood-Lead Analysis”, 2014)



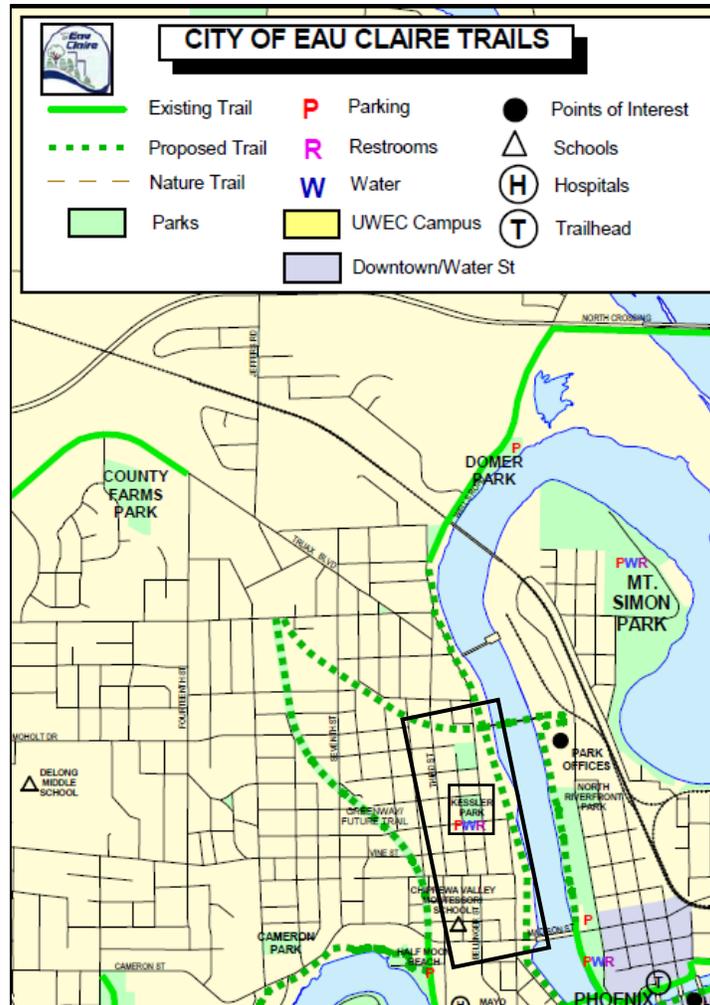
("Average Number of Defects", 2014)



("Parcels Surveyed – Defects per Parcel", 2011)

**Eau Claire West Bank Data: Green Space and Trails.** The City of Eau Claire has a lot of walking and biking paths throughout the city. Much of the space along the rivers has been developed into parks. Most recently Phoenix Park was developed along the east side of the Chippewa River. This space has become a great resource for the city, providing fitness opportunities, farmers' markets, and concerts. However, as the map below outlines, there is very little park space in the West Bank area and there are no existing trails in this neighborhood. The small box within the West Bank District highlights Kessler Park, which is about one block in size and holds a baseball field and a playground. This park is highly utilized by the Hmong families in the neighborhood. There is also a significant amount of space along the river that is currently undeveloped. Part of this space is currently used for snow dumping. Nevertheless, as the map illustrates, there is a proposed trail along the west side of the Chippewa River to spread across the top of the West Bank District. The trail will also utilize an old, unused railroad bridge to extend across the Chippewa River and connect with future trails on the east river bank ("City of Eau Claire Trails", 2014).

Because the West Bank District does not encompass a lot of physical space, there is the potential for walkability within the community. Currently, stores and businesses are located near many of the homes, allowing residents to walk to these places instead of driving or taking the bus. However, because there has not been a lot of reinvestment in this area, there are not many job opportunities, businesses, schools, recreational opportunities, or points of interest in the immediate area. This means that there is not a lot for residents to walk to. In turn, this reduces the opportunity and desire for physical activity through walking and biking.



("City of Eau Claire Trails", 2014)

**Eau Claire West Bank Data: Neighborhood Safety.** The West Bank District is a relatively small area of the city, but it experiences a disproportionately high crime rate. According to the census data, the West Bank District is located in Block Group 5. The West Bank makes up about a quarter of the block group. The population of Block Group 5 is 1,421, which is 2.2% of the total population of the City of Eau Claire ("2010 Census Interactive Population Map", 2011). It is reasonable to assume that the population of the West Bank District is less than 2.2% of the entire city. As illustrated in the chart below, 14.9% of DUIs, 9.1% of all vandalism, 8.5% of thefts, 7.9% of all assaults, and 7.5% of all burglaries occurred in the West Bank District. Furthermore, for each type of crime displayed below, the West Bank District had a disproportionate number when compared to the size of its population ("CrimeMapping.com", 2014).

While the numbers are not extremely high for all types of crime, the disparity is clear. The West Bank contains a very small portion of Eau Claire's population, but experiences a higher level of crime.

<b>Crime Data between 05/23/2014 and 11/02/2014</b>			
<b>Crime</b>	<b>City of Eau Claire</b>	<b>West Bank District</b>	<b>Percentage of all Crime</b>
<b>Assault</b>	101	8	7.9%
<b>Burglary</b>	67	5	7.5%
<b>Disturbing the Peace</b>	794	35	4.4%
<b>Drug/Alcohol Violations</b>	164	8	4.9%
<b>DUIs</b>	47	7	14.9%
<b>Motor Vehicle Theft</b>	24	1	4.2%
<b>Theft/Larceny</b>	200	17	8.5%
<b>Vandalism</b>	156	15	9.1%
<b>Vehicle Break-in/Theft</b>	69	2	2.9%

("CrimeMapping.com", 2014)

The higher crime rate in the West Bank District is most likely exacerbated by the number of older, renter-occupied homes, poor upkeep of housing and businesses, and vacant land. The neighborhood also lacks safety and security measures such as fences around homes and adequate lighting. These things can all lead to increased rates of burglaries, thefts, and vandalism. Furthermore, there is a methadone clinic located in the West Bank District. While this provides some positive benefits to the City of Eau Claire, there may be an increase in drug/alcohol violations and DUIs as a result of people coming to this neighborhood to seek services. This may also increase the residents' perceptions of crime within the community. Currently, there is nothing to address this potential increase in crime or perception of crime.

**Eau Claire West Bank Data: Access to Fresh Foods.** Access to fresh foods is limited within the West Bank District. There are a couple of stores in the area that sell food, but fresh fruits and vegetables are limited. Kwik Trip offers a partial selection of fresh foods and there are a couple of Asian grocery stores, but they offer mostly packaged and processed foods. The nearest full size grocery store is about 2.5 miles away from the West Bank District. This is too far for residents to walk to, especially if they need to carry a lot of groceries. There is a bus that runs from West Bank to the grocery store, but it

is a 20 minute ride and the bus runs every 30 minutes. Other access to fresh foods includes the Downtown Farmers' Market, which runs from May through October. This is located across the river from the West Bank community. While this farmers' market is only available during summer months, there is also a winter farmers' market. Fortunately, this is located at the L.E. Phillips Senior Center, which is located within the West Bank District. However, the winter market takes place one Saturday per month for a 4 hour time period. While this is a great resource, it is not always available and accessible. The limited amount of access to fresh fruits and vegetables limits the choices for West Bank residents. Because there are barriers to accessing fresh foods, residents may be more likely to choose unhealthy choices that are more available and accessible. This could lead to poor diets and negative health outcomes ("Food Deserts", 2014).

**Eau Claire West Bank Data: Social Cohesion.** Social cohesion within a community can lead to positive health outcomes for residents. Community gathering places and relationships between neighbors can reduce stress and provide protection for individuals. However, there is a lack of community cohesion within the West Bank District. There are a limited number of places which residents can gather and get to know each other. People often collect at places in the community that bring people together and promote relationship building. However, there is only one restaurant located within the neighborhood (Egg Rolls Plus) and one located just outside (Chick-A-Dees). Moreover, there is only one bar located in the West Bank (Big T's Saloon). There are no recreational or community centers in the West Bank or even nearby. Kessler Park is the neighborhood park and offers open space, a public shelter, ball field, basketball court, and playground equipment to help bring people together. The closest YMCA is about 2.5 miles away and it takes 2 buses and over a half hour to arrive. The public library and the nearest movie theater are both 1.5 miles away. Additionally, there are no churches or schools within the West Bank. These are places that tend to naturally encourage community cohesion. The biggest community gathering space in the West Bank community is the Children's Theatre. This is a

great asset for the community. It promotes art in the neighborhood and brings residents together in one place.

The lack of gathering places within the West Bank is exacerbated by the lack of a neighborhood association. There is nothing to encourage neighbors to get to know each other and talk about community issues. This leaves the community very disjointed and allows problems within the community to grow and continue when they are not addressed. The City's Community Development Department previously worked to help assemble an association during neighborhood planning efforts but neighbors choose not to organize after the plan was created.

### **Media Analysis**

The media has a large influence on community perspectives and beliefs and can affect how society perceives an issue. The media analysis was conducted for this HIA to determine how the media has portrayed the West Bank Redevelopment Project. The analysis looked at all available newscasts, articles, blogs, and meeting minutes that referenced the redevelopment project and were publicly available. Several search engines were utilized to find available news sources. In addition, several Eau Claire websites were examined for news related to the redevelopment. Once the media sources were identified, the analysis process looked for themes and trends throughout these pieces to determine if and how they may affect and represent the population within and around the West Bank area.

A total of 11 articles were found through the media analysis. The articles are from 8 different news sources, including 3 television news stations, 2 online newsletters, 1 printed newspaper, 1 online news source, and 1 printed local magazine. The pieces date from October 2008 through November 2014. Most of the articles are relatively brief, containing between 150 and 400 words. Two articles include maps of the West Bank Redevelopment area and three articles include comments from the public. Five articles focus on the purchase of buildings or land in the district, 4 articles discuss future

plans and next steps for the redevelopment project, 1 article asks the public for ideas for the project, and 1 article highlights a brewery being considered in the West Bank area.

Four of the articles are straightforward and fact-focused. The articles are straight to the point and describe location, cost, and previous owners of the properties and land purchased. These articles do not contain any descriptive or emotional language ("Deal for Eau Claire to buy West Bank property approved" 2012; Eau Claire Current, 2014; "Eau Claire – Redevelopment Authority buys another West Bank property", 2014; Woods, 2013). A fifth article is also straightforward, but has more detail about the Redevelopment Authority's budget, plans for future purchases, properties that will not be purchased, and redevelopment plans, including plans for park space, retail locations, and housing (Dowd, 2014). A sixth article is similar in that it explains plans and purchases for redevelopment, but it provides more detail about the redevelopment project. It describes that the Children's Theatre will remain in the area, but will be refurbished to act as an anchor for the corridor. The article also explains that the city does not have the power to condemn blighted properties and that the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) has been offering to buy properties only from willing sellers. The article uses more descriptive language and detail (Dowd, 2012).

The remaining articles take a more unique approach to explaining the redevelopment project. One article discusses the redevelopment plans, but provides a realistic timeline for the project. It explains that the process will likely take many years and highlights some steps that have been taken and steps that are planned for the future (Woods, 2014). Another article describes the approval of the redevelopment project and highlights the fact that the West Bank area is considered a "blighted" area as determined by a zoning assessment. The article further explains that "the city has an opportunity to access federal funds and create a possible Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) District to assist with the purchase and demolition of certain buildings and land within the designated 30-acre area" ("City of Eau Claire Approves West Bank Concept", 2014).

One of the articles poses a question for the public about what they would like to see happen through the redevelopment. There are two comments on this article, both of which advocate for a convention center in the area (Paulus, 2008). Another article discusses the public opinion of the project, including what the community wants to see through the redevelopment, and whether these opinions have been taken into consideration by the planners. There are 17 comments on this article. The comments are a mix of positive and negative. However, some of the comments extend to other redevelopment projects throughout Eau Claire. Additionally, 7 of the comments focus on the need for a grocery store in the area. The final article highlights a brewery that signed a temporary 3 year lease in the West Bank area. The story doesn't focus on the redevelopment project, but mentions that the lease is temporary because redevelopment is planned for the near future (Bringe, 2014).

Seven of the eleven articles included a quote from Mike Schatz, Economic Development Director and Executive Director of the Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority. His comments are primarily about properties that have been purchased by the Redevelopment Authority for the purpose of redevelopment. The quotes also include properties that the RDA plan to purchase for redevelopment, budget restrictions in relation to the project, plans for the redevelopment project, and the potential timeline of the project. Most of Mike Schatz's quotes are very factual and contain very little emotional language. However, he does make a couple statements about his vision for the project, including one quote that states, "I think it has some great potential, great energy" (Bringe, 2014). In addition to quotes from Mike Schatz, one article provided 3 residents' perspectives. These included the need for a grocery store, parking, and "something the Eau Claire community can be proud of" (Bringe, 2014).

In addition to the news articles identified, meeting agendas and minutes from the Redevelopment Authority (RDA), the Eau Claire City Council, and the City of Eau Claire Plan Commission referenced the West Bank Redevelopment Project. All of these minutes are made public and reflect different levels and stages of the planning process. The Redevelopment Authority addresses the West

Bank Redevelopment in almost every one of their meetings. The project was referenced during 7 meetings in 2013 and 4 meetings through June of 2014. Most of these meetings address property purchases in the West Bank area, plans for the redevelopment, and budget restrictions ("Redevelopment Authority Agendas and Minutes", 2014). The City Council referenced the West Bank Redevelopment in 3 meetings between 2010 and 2013. This included the approval of a 6 month moratorium on construction projects in the area in 2010, approving an exception to moratorium, and passing a motion to provide \$200,000 from the Infill Incentive Loan Program to the Redevelopment Authority to purchase properties in the West Bank area. All motions were passed unanimously ("City Council Minutes", 2014). Finally, the City of Eau Claire Plan Commission addressed the redevelopment in 2 meetings in 2008. These references involved reviewing the West Bank Redevelopment District Plan ("Plan Commission Agenda and Minutes", 2014). City Council, the Redevelopment Authority, and the Plan Commission meetings are typically attended by board members and redevelopment and planning staff. These meetings are also open to the public, but public attendance is not recorded.

Overall, the media analysis found that media representations of the West Bank Redevelopment Project most often portrayed the redevelopment project through neutral facts and specific details around the past, present, and future of the redevelopment. The main themes of the news articles are explanations of land and building purchases for the purpose of redevelopment. Other themes include public opinion and thoughts on the future of the redevelopment. Comments on the articles illustrate that the public supports the redevelopment, but has some negative outlooks and concerns about how the project will develop in the future. Many of the articles quote Mike Schatz. He is an advocate for the redevelopment and has been involved in the project through the Redevelopment Authority. His comments are mostly neutral, but a few have are more positive, highlighting some of the plans and potential for the West Bank area.

However, the low number of news sources identified between 2008 and 2014 demonstrates that the project has not received a large amount of media attention. This may result in a lack of complete understanding and support of the project. Furthermore, only two articles touch on public opinions and thoughts on the redevelopment. As some of the comments supported, this exemplifies how the project has not fully involved the community in the redevelopment plans. The media analysis made it clear that community perspective has not been a priority in the planning process and some public may feel slighted by this. However, the minutes from the various Eau Claire meetings demonstrate that planning and implementation steps have taken place and more planning meetings are scheduled in the future. There is also the potential to include community input in future plans during more specific planning efforts, project open houses, and public hearings. The Redevelopment Authority often includes community participation when formulating redevelopment proposals. It is important to ensure that the community has the opportunity to provide feedback on the project so that the outcome of the redevelopment meets the needs of the residents.

### **Key Informant Interviews**

Key informant interviews were done with a number of stakeholders to involve them in the HIA process, obtain their knowledge and opinions of the West Bank Redevelopment, and uncover information that is not available through existing data research. There are many ways to involve stakeholders in the HIA process. However, key informant interviews were chosen for this HIA due to the rapid nature of the process. Key informant interviews allow targeted questioning to individuals who have direct involvement in the redevelopment project. The interviews are structured, but the conversational nature allows the interviewer to ask unplanned questions based on responses during the interview. Interviews allow for the discovery of data and information that may not have been anticipated through the original questions. This allows for more information gathering than can be completed through surveys. However, while key informant interviews have many benefits, there are

some disadvantages. For example, key informant interviews typically gather information from a small number of individuals. This can exclude a large amount of the population. Furthermore, interviews obtain knowledge and opinions from one person. This may not be representative of the entire community. Despite these challenges, key informant interviews are the best way to engage community stakeholders in this HIA process.

Stakeholders in the West Bank Redevelopment were chosen by their involvement with the project or their involvement with the community. The individuals interviewed included Ned Noel (Eau Claire City Planner), Lieske Giese (Director-Health Officer, Eau Claire Health Department), Shane Sanderson (Environmental Health Director, Eau Claire Health Department), Mike Schatz (Economic Development Director and Executive Director of the Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority), Kathy Mitchell (Elected official on the Board of Health, City Council and City Plan Commission), Mary Pica Anderson (L.E. Phillips Senior Center), and Kelly Muellman (HIA Coordinator, Gary/New Duluth Small Area Plan HIA). As a city planner, Ned Noel has a lot of experience around past redevelopment projects and a lot of knowledge on the West Bank Redevelopment plan. Lieske Giese and Shane Sanderson understand the public health impacts of built environment changes and have opinions on issues that should be addressed through redevelopment. Mike Schatz is deeply involved in planning the West Bank redevelopment and can provide a significant amount of knowledge around the past, present, and future of the project. Kathy Mitchell provides a unique perspective in that she serves on both the Board of Health, Plan Commission, and the City Council. She can speak to policy decisions related to the redevelopment as well as the public health impacts. Mary Pica Anderson represents the senior population in the West Bank community. Her perspective exemplifies a population that can often be overlooked in redevelopment projects. Finally, Kelly Muellman conducted a similar HIA in Minnesota. Her feedback on the process informed this HIA to make it more successful.

For each interview, consent was obtained and each stakeholder allowed the interview to be recorded. Each individual also allowed their identity and responses to be used in the final report. Each interview consisted of a series of structured questions and possible probes, depending on the direction of the conversation. While questions varied depending on the individual being interviewed, most of the question covered the stakeholder's knowledge of and role in the redevelopment, his or her opinion of important considerations for the West Bank Community, his or her vision for a successful redevelopment, and the perceived impacts of the project.

**Ned Noel: Eau Claire City Planner.** Ned Noel brought up many different aspects of the West Bank community during his interview. Noel recognizes the potential positive outcomes of the redevelopment project, but also understands multiple factors that must be addressed along the way. Noel explained that there is a Hmong population that lives within the West Bank District. They own a few grocery stores and restaurants along one of the streets in the West Bank. Noel stated that it will be important to include them in planning the redevelopment. These business owners have been in the area for quite some time and have a lot invested in the community. Also, Noel addressed the perception of crime in the West Bank District. Although Noel did not provide exact numbers, he explained that many residents perceive high amounts of crime, particularly burglaries and thefts. Several local businesses had been broken into and this increased the perception of crime throughout the community.

Noel also discussed the problem with brownfields left from past industrial plants that caused a lot of pollution in the ground. He explained that this is a barrier to redevelopment, but something that is being addressed by a potential EPA Brownfield Grant that the Redevelopment Authority is applying for. By fixing these up, there is the potential for a lot of growth and redevelopment throughout the West Bank. Noel said that he wants to see business brought back downtown. In the past several years, many businesses have moved out of downtown, but he sees this turning around and he wants to

promote it. Noel also pointed out the potential for a bike path to be developed in the West Bank area and he explained the plan to convert the decommissioned railroad bridge into a trail that will connect the West Bank to other trails across the river. Additionally, Noel explained that the Mayo Clinic could be a huge resource in the West Bank Redevelopment Project. Because they have such a strong presence in the area, there is the potential for them to be involved. Specifically, employees of the clinic could be prime candidate for new housing in the West Bank District. They could also frequent the restaurants and bars constructed during the redevelopment.

Noel has been involved with other redevelopment projects and has a lot of knowledge around the West Bank Project. He has also been working with the Health Department to encourage positive health outcomes for residents through the redevelopment.

**Lieske Giese: Director-Health Officer, Eau Claire Health Department.** Lieske Giese addressed several aspects of the redevelopment project and described how they will impact the health of the community. One area that she focused on was the health disparities that exist in Eau Claire. Giese explained that while the health disparities in Eau Claire are not as significant as they are in larger cities, they certainly exist in Eau Claire. According to Giese, the West Bank District is one area that is lower income and experiences worse health outcomes compared to the rest of the city. The redevelopment has the potential to address the remove these disparities, however certain considerations need to be made. For example, Giese explained that the redevelopment talks about all of the great changes that will be made and these often sound high end. However, what happens to people who are low income? Giese stated that this is particularly true around housing. Housing surveys conducted by the health department indicate that the West Bank area has a high number of home defects and identified blood lead levels. There has also been a large increase in rental properties across Eau Claire as a whole. This leads to housing problems that go unaddressed and a lack of social cohesion. There is almost no community organizing in the area. Giese explained that this, along with the problems with housing, can

lead to poor health outcomes for community members. There is a large connection between housing and health and people in Eau Claire are starting to recognize this.

Giese also addressed assets throughout the West Bank District. One is the Hmong population. She explained that they have grocery stores and restaurants in an area of the West Bank district. It is important that they are involved as the redevelopment moves forward. Also, the Children's Theatre is a large community asset that can be highlighted in the redevelopment. Furthermore, the Kwik Trip poses an interesting partnership. They currently serve a wide variety of customers, from low income to high income. They also provide some fresh food options. These partnerships are important to consider in planning the redevelopment. Giese also talked about the Methadone clinic in the West Bank. She explained that it brings in people from all over the region. They also stopped accepting Medicaid very recently. This clinic plays an interesting role in the community and should be considered carefully as well. Giese explained that there are benefits to having the clinic in the neighborhood, but it also has a negative association for some citizens.

Overall, Giese views the redevelopment project as an opportunity to bring attention to the current disparities that exist in the area and hopefully address them. However, she acknowledged the importance of including community partners and considering all populations when planning the West Bank redevelopment.

**Shane Sanderson: Environmental Health Director, Eau Claire Health Department.** Shane Sanderson provided a health perspective of the West Bank Redevelopment Project, specifically through the environmental lens. One area that he focused on was the condition of housing in the West Bank area. The health department conducts a housing survey to determine where inspections need to be made. This is done to keep the housing stock out of blight. The West Bank area is very active on this survey, meaning this area has many defective homes. This could include a poorly constructed roof, lead based paint, or lack of heat or running water. Furthermore, Sanderson said that the area in which the

West Bank is located has 80% rental housing and 20% owner-occupied housing. This is likely to be the same or more disparate in the specific West Bank area. This has a large impact on how people value property and take care of their homes. Sanderson also explained that because the redevelopment is on the horizon, many landowners have been making only temporary fixes. Sanderson described that these housing problems have led to worse health outcomes for the residents in the West Bank.

Sanderson also discussed the aspect of brownfield sites and soil pollution. He explained that the presence of lead, radon, and other pollutants in the soil can increase cancer rates for citizens. If the brownfield sites are not cleaned up, this could have negative health impacts for residents. Sanderson explained that there is a lot of federal money to clean up these brownfields. Additionally, there are some plants that can be used in certain areas to pull lead out of the soil. While the pollution presents a potential problem for redevelopment, there are some feasible options for addressing it in order to reduce the risk of negative health outcomes.

Finally, Sanderson addressed the problem of crime in the community and how to encourage walkability. He explained that there have been heroin concerns in the West Bank area and there are ways in which the redevelopment can use engineering to deter crime. One thing he suggested was improving the lighting within the community. Sanderson also talked about improving walkability. He said that the community has a lot of potential to encourage walkability. He explained that some of this is already established, but it needs to be encouraged. Sanderson also described the importance of getting feedback from different people throughout the West Bank. He specifically used the Hmong population as an example. Sanderson explained that one culture's means of getting physical activity might not match another culture's. For example, putting in a bike path may serve as a means of physical activity for one group of people, but it may not be sufficient or accessible for another. It is important to learn these differences and incorporate them into the redevelopment. This can also improve upon social cohesion. Sanderson also explained that a lack of social cohesion is linked to heat advisory

deaths. Social cohesion means that neighbors are more likely to check in on each other and prevent negative health outcomes.

Sanderson's view on the redevelopment is positive overall. He realizes the potential for positive change. However, he also sees the benefit in planning long-term. He wondered whether upgrading a strip of land has effects on the neighboring area. Does the redevelopment impact the health of neighboring communities? Sanderson recommends long-term planning across the entire city to address health outcomes, not just focusing only on one small area at a time.

**Mike Schatz: Economic Development Director and Executive Director of the Eau Claire**

**Redevelopment Authority.** As the executive director of the Redevelopment Authority (RDA), Mike Schatz has been very involved with the West Bank Redevelopment Project and he has a lot of knowledge around the past, present, and future of the project. He explained that it is the responsibility of the RDA to find blighted areas downtown and along the riverfront that are in need of redevelopment. They identified a prime example in the West Bank area. The West Bank had a lot of industrial properties that aren't often present in downtowns anymore. According to Schatz, this has caused a lot of industrial pollution that has to be addressed as the redevelopment moves forward. The RDA is currently applying for an EPA Brownfield Grant that will help to address and remove this pollution.

As Eau Claire moves to a more urban downtown, the RDA is working to remove blight and make better use of the space along the river. So far, the RDA has been identifying and buying properties in the West Bank area for potential rehabilitation or demolition. The plan is to develop an outline for green space, parks, and trails and then gather proposals for redevelopment plans that fit with this design. Mike Schatz estimates that all properties will be purchased by the end of 2016 or early 2017. The RDA has to follow all state statutes for redevelopment and they want to take down buildings in a way that is most cost effective for tax payers.

Mike Schatz explained his vision for the West Bank District. He hopes to clean it up and improve the image of the area. This involves a series of bike trails and public park space and mixed use buildings including restaurants overlooking the river, office space, and people living above. Schatz also said that there is an opportunity to involve the Mayo Clinic and the L.E. Phillips Senior Center. There could be offices for doctors from the Mayo Clinic and rental options for traveling doctors who will be staying in Eau Claire temporarily. Housing options for seniors will also be considered in the redevelopment.

The RDA plans to involve the community in the planning process so that the city, local businesses, and residents will be able to provide feedback and ideas on the redevelopment. The RDA wants to create an area that the community embraces. Schatz explained that, "It'll take an older area that there isn't a lot of activity in now and turn it into an area that people will be drawn to." Despite this goal, Schatz recognizes some challenges that face the redevelopment plans. First, the community often complains that the process takes too long. They want to see immediate results, but due to planning and budgeting, this is not feasible. Moreover, financial budgets restrict how fast the RDA can buy up properties and poses potential problems for the redevelopment plans. It has to be determined how to pay for parks and trails and other aspects of the redevelopment. Finally, Mike Schatz recognizes that trends can change. Currently, people are moving downtown again, which revitalizes the area and improves the economy. This encourages redevelopment. However, if people decide to move out to the suburbs again, this can hurt the areas downtown and redevelopment will suffer.

**Kathy Mitchell: Elected official on the Board of Health, City Council and City Plan Commission.**

Because Kathy Mitchell is an elected official that sits on the City Council, the City Plan Commission, and the Board of Health, she offers a unique perspective on the redevelopment. She recognizes that there are important parts of the redevelopment project that can facilitate health for residents. First, she stated that the neighborhood really needs a grocery store. She explained that the farmers' market is a wonderful resource, but the growing season is short in Wisconsin. She also said that a year round public

market would be another great benefit to the community, but that citizens can't afford to buy everything they need at a public market. Cost is a big factor for residents and a grocery store is necessary to meet that need. Second, Mitchell described that need to make better use of the land along the rivers. She described the successes with Phoenix Park and the impacts that it had on the community. The city needs a new area to rival Phoenix Park in beauty and amenities. Mitchell further explained that the city needed to move away from the current industrial area along the river so that, "the people in the community can have trails and parks and public spaces along the river so that they can enjoy and appreciate the rivers." Third, Mitchell recognizes the need for a neighborhood association in the West Bank community. She explained that when the city works on a neighborhood plan, they try to get people interested. This has been a challenge in the West Bank area. Mitchell explained that because there are a lot of rental units in the district, it is harder to get people involved because they don't have as much of an invested interest.

Kathy Mitchell also talked about some problems with housing in the community. A lot of buildings in the area need demolition or rehabilitation. She clarified that a lot of housing has not been well maintained, which is often difficult when the homes are not owner-occupied. Mitchell said that about 80% of the housing stock is rental and that it is likely inhabited by people with low incomes. She explained a nearby building being rehabilitated for mixed income housing. She said that this could be an option for the West Bank. Mitchell doesn't believe that the plan removes any current residents, but this would be a concern if they bulldozed current housing and the residents has nowhere to go. Mitchell hopes that development in the West Bank area could spur some redevelopment in neighboring residential areas as well. Finally, Mitchell also address the snow dumping location in the West Bank District. She explained that this could be moved to a better place.

Overall, Kathy Mitchell has a positive outlook on the redevelopment project and wants to ensure that the community is involved with the planning process. She described the importance of

including the Economic Development Office, city planners, the public health department, the parks department, public works, the children's theater, and a neighborhood association if one existed.

Mitchell said of the project, "I can only imagine that people would benefit from it."

**Mary Pica Anderson: L.E. Phillips Senior Center.** Mary Pica Anderson represents a subpopulation within the West Bank District. Because she works at the senior center, she understands and speaks to the needs of the senior population. She wants to ensure that the redevelopment project keeps the community senior friendly. This would include mixed senior housing, both independent and assisted living options, and transportation for seniors. Pica Anderson also explained that many seniors leave during the winter months. Housing to accommodate this could be a great resource.

Pica Anderson hopes to see many outcomes from the West Bank redevelopment. She explained that there are a lot of unkempt homes that need to be fixed up. She also clarified that a variety of housing options would be beneficial, including independent living and family homes. Pica Anderson also stated that the redevelopment could help the economy through tax dollars, community dollars, and an increase in retail shopping and restaurants. She wants to see a place that residents will raise their kids in, retire in, living longer in. It would keep a variety of populations living in the same area. Finally, Pica Anderson would like to see, "green space for people to be able to enjoy the beautiful community we have." She said that she can't foresee any potential consequences to current residents.

**Key Themes and Findings.** Each individual that was interviewed provided a unique perspective on the West Bank Redevelopment Project. While each had a different viewpoint, many recurring themes arose. Every individual who was interviewed brought up housing as an issue in the West Bank area. Whether it was defects with current housing, the high number of rental properties, or the lack of mixed housing options, each person recognized the need for change. This indicates a lack of affordable, safe, and accessible options for people in the area. Also, every individual interviewed addressed the potential for developing green space along the river. Multiple people talked about the potential for bike

trails and park space for people to enjoy the river and neighborhood. This demonstrates that green space is a highly valued and sought after feature that can be developed and utilized in the West Bank area.

More than one individual addressed the problem with crime in the neighborhood. Ned Noel spoke for residents and local business owners, stating that the perception of crime is high in the community. Shane Sanderson also addressed the problem with crime, specifically around heroin use and lack of engineered safety features. Lieske Giese, Shane Sanderson, Kathy Mitchell, and Ned Noel all touched on social cohesion. Giese and Sanderson discussed potential negative health outcomes associated with the lack of social cohesion. Mitchell also talked about the lack of social cohesion in the West Bank community, explaining that there is no neighborhood association. Noel described social cohesion through engaging various neighborhood populations in the redevelopment project.

Other features that arose were brownfield pollution from previous industrial plants, lack of access to fresh and affordable foods in the district, where to move the snow dumping location, and the importance of engaging the community members in the redevelopment project. Overall, every key informant interview highlighted the great potential for the West Bank district. Each individual had an optimistic view of what this redevelopment project can provide for the West Bank community and the City of Eau Claire.

### **Evaluation of Potential Health Impacts**

Based on the findings from existing data, the media analysis, and the key information interviews, certain predictions were made in relation to potential health outcomes resulting from the West Bank Redevelopment Project. Established through research gathered from existing data and information collected through the media analysis and key informant interviews, 5 focus areas emerged. Each area is outlined below and includes the current redevelopment recommendations associated with

the focus area, potential positive and negative outcomes from this change, proposed alternative redevelopment options, and the potential for improved health equity.

### **Eau Claire West Bank: Housing.**

Problem: Currently, over 50% of all housing in the West Bank District is rental properties. This leads to a variety of problems for the community, including a lack of community involvement from residents, run-down homes, and few housing options for new residents. Additionally, many of the houses in the West Bank area are very old. This causes problems with lead and defects in the homes.

Current Recommendations: The current redevelopment plans include developing new housing in the area and rehabilitating the current housing in the district. New housing would include mixed use homes, such as apartments, condos, and family homes. The rehabilitation process could include lead abatement and repairing current defects in homes.

Potential Positive Health Impacts: The potential positive impacts of these recommendations are widespread. First, there is a potential for an increase of residents. Second, there is a reduced likelihood of lead poisoning and injury from the current housing. Third, there is the potential for economic improvements through more owner-occupied homes. Finally, there is likely to be less stress for residents around their housing situation.

Potential Negative Health Impacts: Despite the positive impacts, there are some potential negative impacts to consider. First, there is the potential for current residents to be displaced if their homes are demolished or purchased for redevelopment. Second, there is the potential for gentrification. This would mean that many of the current residents who are low-income may not be able to afford housing in the district if home and rental prices are targeted toward higher-income individuals. This means that the current residents would have to move to a different neighborhood with low-income housing options. Third, subpopulations such as seniors may not be considered when housing is developed. These potential outcomes can lead to disproportionate health outcomes to the individuals who are

displaced or overlooked in the redevelopment. Without affordable, safe housing, individuals are more likely to suffer from worse health outcomes.

Alternative Considerations: In response to these potential negative consequences, there are some alternatives to consider. First, there are options to address the potential for displacement and gentrification. There are tax credit programs or rent control programs that can help low-income individuals afford housing in the area. Also, mixed income housing could be developed so that people of all socio-economic statuses can afford homes in the community. Second, it is important to consider subpopulations when developing housing. For example, independent living or assisted living housing options can be developed so that the aging population has a place to live safely. There are also many health professionals who work at the Mayo Clinic. Housing could be developed to encourage them to move into the area. Rental properties could also be made available for traveling doctors and seniors who live in Eau Claire in the summer but live in warmer states during the winter.

Promoting Health Equity: If the current redevelopment plans are followed and alternatives are considered, there is the potential to improve health equity within the West Bank area through enhanced housing options. All current and potential residents can have access to affordable and safe homes through mixed housing options such as rental properties, condos, family homes, and independent and assisted living options for senior. Addressing current low-income residents is important to ensure that no one is displaced or can no longer afford housing in the neighborhood. This guarantees that no one is unsafe living in their own homes or are put under financial stress through high rent or mortgage payments. By making housing available to all populations, disparities between socio-economic groups can be reduced.

#### **Eau Claire West Bank: Green Space and Trails.**

Problem: In the West Bank area, there is a lot of undeveloped space along the river and throughout the district. Despite this space, there is currently only one small park (Kessler's Park) in the area and there

are no bike or walking trails. There is the potential for walkability throughout the neighborhood, but this is not currently encouraged.

Current Recommendations: The current redevelopment plans recommend developing the area along the Chippewa River into parks and green space. The plans also endorse constructing a bike and walking trail along the river and reconstructing the decommissioned railroad bridge into a path that connects to the other side of the river. The recommendations also include using Kessler's Park for building development and using the land along the river for park space instead. Finally, the plans involve moving the snow dumping location to a different, undetermined place in Eau Claire.

Potential Positive Health Impacts: There are many potential positive health outcomes from these recommended changes. First, there is the potential for increased physical activity among residents. Having outdoor space to utilize for walking, biking, and other recreational purposes will encourage residents to increase the amount of physical activity they participate in each day. There is also the potential for decreased pollution from automobile use. If people have the ability to walk and bike through the community, they will be less likely to drive their cars. Furthermore, there is the potential for improved social cohesion in the community. If the park is used as a gathering place for picnics, concerts, gardens, and recreation, residents will spend more time together and improve the community connection. Finally, the improved green space will encourage residents from nearby neighborhoods to access the community. This will create ties between existing neighborhoods and the redeveloped West Bank District. This can result in positive health impacts for not only the West Bank area, but the surrounding areas as well. The redevelopment will promote physical activity of surrounding neighborhoods through the developed green space. Moreover, it will encourage the stabilization of real estate values in both the West Bank area, as well as the surrounding areas.

Potential Negative Health Impacts: There are not many potential negative impacts of the increased green space and trails. However, there is the possibility that residents will be displaced if their homes

are within the area that the parks or trails will be constructed. There are three homes in particular near the railway bridge that may be demolished to construct the bike trail. Also, the city will have to find a new location for the snow dumping area. This could cause problems for another area within the City of Eau Claire. Finally, removing Kessler's Park may not be a problem if other green spaces are developed, but it may create a void within that neighborhood.

Alternative Considerations: There are some alternatives to consider when redeveloping the green space and trails within the West Bank District. First is addressing the potential for displacement. If homes will be demolished, it is important to ensure that these residents have somewhere to go. Second, ensure that there is access to park space for all residents if Kessler's Park is removed. Another thing to consider is improving sidewalks within the community. This will improve walkability within the district and will encourage the use of trails and green space if they are easily accessible.

Promoting Health Equity: Green space and trails offer a unique benefit to the community in that they offer free and accessible physical activity options to all residents. Many people cannot afford gym memberships or do not have transportation to get to a gym. Trails and green space in the neighborhood allow all residents to engage in regular physical activity, regardless of their income. By engaging in regular physical activity, residents are less likely to be obese and suffer from negative health outcomes such as heart disease and diabetes. The park space could also be used for community gardens which could allow residents to grow their own healthy food options. This allows affordable and accessible food choices.

#### **Eau Claire West Bank: Neighborhood Safety and Crime.**

Problem: In the West Bank community, the crime rate is disproportionate to the size and population of the area. While the crime rate is not incredibly high, it is still a disparate amount compared to the rest of the city. Furthermore, perception of crime within the community is high. There is also very poor

lighting and security in the neighborhood, which can encourage crime. Currently, there are no structures or programs to address or deter crime in the West Bank area.

Current Recommendations: The redevelopment plans include the installation of street lights along the roads and fences around houses and buildings to deter crime in the neighborhood.

Potential Positive Health Impacts: While these improvements may seem minor, there are large potential impacts. First, if residents feel safe going outside in their community, they are more likely to engage in physical activity, which can reduce their potential for obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. Second, the local economy has the potential to improve. If residents feel safe outside, they are more likely to frequent local businesses. Also, a reduction in the number of burglaries and thefts will help local businesses with loss and other associated costs. Third, less crime will most likely mean less stress for residents and business owners. This can lead to improved health outcomes over the longer term, such as a reduction in chronic disease and fewer injuries from assaults or other violent crimes.

Potential Negative Health Impacts: There are no notable negative health impacts associated with these changes.

Alternative Considerations: Other possibilities to consider when addressing crime in the West Bank community include a program to address crime. This could be a Neighborhood Watch Programs. This is often resident run and has little or no cost to the community. A program like this could address the current crime rate and potentially prevent crime in the future. Another thing to consider is Eau Claire Metro, the methadone clinic located in the West Bank District. While the clinic itself is offering an important service to Eau Claire citizens, it has the potential to increase the perception of crime in the neighborhood. People often associate methadone clinics with individuals who use drugs or even possible drug dealers. People who use and deal drugs are also associated with crime. Whether or not this is true of the clients at Eau Claire Metro, residents of the West Bank District may have negative feelings toward the clinic. It is important to weigh the advantages and disadvantages when addressing the clinic's

presence in the area. It might be beneficial to implement increased security around the clinic. This could include video cameras or a security guard. This could help to decrease the perception of crime associated with the methadone clinic and increase residents' feeling of safety. Increased security measures would allow the clinic to remain in the West Bank area and continue to provide necessary services to community members.

Promoting Health Equity: Neighborhood safety is an important thing to consider when building health equity in a community. Low income neighborhoods are more likely to experience higher rates of crime. If residents do not feel safe in their own communities, they are less likely to participate in outdoor physical activity and support local businesses. Furthermore, low income residents are less likely to be able to afford gym memberships so their options for physical activity are limited. However, if the recommendations and alternatives are considered in the redevelopment project, health equity can be improved in the community. Crime can be prevented through physical structures and neighborhood watch programs so that all residents can experience their neighborhood in a healthy, stress free manner. All residents can engage in regular physical activity, regardless of their income, and business owners will have reduced stress levels if there are fewer burglaries and thefts.

#### **Eau Claire West Bank: Access to Fresh Foods.**

Problem: For residents in the West Bank District, there are very few options for accessing and purchasing fresh foods. The nearest grocery store is about 2.5 miles away and farmers' markets are limited by the seasons. This means that residents either have to purchase from local stores that offer mostly processed and packaged foods or they have to travel to buy groceries. This can be especially difficult if residents do not have access to transportation.

Current Recommendations: Current recommendations for the West Bank redevelopment include building a year round public market in the neighborhood. This would allow local farmers and business owners to sell their fresh produce and other goods year round.

Potential Positive Health Impacts: A year round public market will allow residents to purchase fresh foods year round. A market in the area is easily accessible and local produce is often less expensive. This allows residents to eat a healthy diet year round, which can reduce the risk for obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. The public market can also improve the economy by supporting local businesses owners and reducing food cost for residents.

Potential Negative Health Impacts: While a year round public market has the potential for a lot of positive outcomes, there are some negative health impacts to consider. First, a public market may not provide all of the food that residents may need. Because it is not a full service grocery store, residents still may not be able to access everything they need for their meals. Second, although the market would be open year round, the growing season in Wisconsin is still limited. This means a large quantity and variety of fresh produce may not be available during winter months. These potential outcomes could lead to poor diets among residents which can cause obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

Alternative Considerations: In order to address the potential negative impacts, a full service grocery store should be considered. A grocery store in the West Bank District would allow residents to easily access all of their food needs at an affordable price. Also, community gardens can be developed in the green space along the Chippewa River. This would allow residents another, more interactive way to learn about healthy eating and have easy access to fresh food options. Both the grocery store and community gardens can be used to promote healthier diets, reducing the potential for negative health outcomes.

Promoting Health Equity: Diet is a major indicator of future health outcomes. As the research has shown, a poor diet can lead to obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other poor health consequences. People often eat a poor diet when they can't easily access fresh foods that are within their price range. Neighborhoods without grocery stores encourage residents to purchase cheaper food sources that are often processed, packaged, and less healthy. This is typical in low income communities. However, by

having a grocery store, a public market, and community gardens, residents in the West Bank community will be surrounded by healthy, affordable food options. These features make the health choice easier for residents. These options allow all residents, regardless of their income, to purchase fresh food, eat a healthy diet, and reduce their risk for negative health outcomes.

#### **Eau Claire West Bank: Social Cohesion.**

Problem: In the West Bank community, there are no programs or structures that encourage residents to interact. This can make individuals feel isolated and it prevents a sense of community from building within the neighborhood. There are currently very few restaurants and bars, only one theater, and no churches or community centers in the West Bank District. Furthermore, there is no Neighborhood Association. These things detach community members, which leads to a lack of social cohesion, and can prevent problems in the area from being addressed.

Current Recommendations: The redevelopment plans address social cohesion in a variety of indirect ways. First, the plan recommends rehabilitating the Children's Theatre that is located in the West Bank. This is a great resource that brings community member together. Second, the plan recommends developing restaurants and retail businesses in the area, which can promote social gathering within the community. Additionally, the plans include the development of green space, which also encourages community gatherings.

Potential Positive Health Impacts: Social cohesion is important when looking at health outcomes. When there is no sense of community within a neighborhood, many negative outcomes can result. For example, communities with social cohesion are more likely to address problems such as crime, blight, or lack of resources. With no common voice, this problems often go overlooked. Furthermore, residents who know their neighbors are more likely to look out for each other. This can be especially helpful for seniors or individuals with disabilities who might need some extra help. By developing places that naturally bring citizens together, social cohesion can be promoted. Developing businesses, restaurants,

parkland, and scenic overlooks will provide opportunities for social gathering. The redevelopment will also link the West Bank to the surrounding neighborhoods by encouraging people from other areas to access the area for the park/river and new businesses and restaurants.

Potential Negative Health Impacts: The only potential negative impact of the current redevelopment plans is that there is nothing to directly address social cohesion. Building places for the community to come together does not necessarily mean that social cohesion will come about naturally. If it does not happen organically through the redevelopment, problems within the community may perpetuate.

Alternative Considerations: In order to address the lack of social cohesion directly, it is important to consider the development of a West Bank Neighborhood Association. This is a formal way to bring residents together to talk about issues within the community and address them head on. The association would provide a voice to the citizens and ensure the community meets their needs.

Promoting Health Equity: Social cohesion is a way to promote health equity indirectly. By bringing the community together, addressing existing and future problems, and building the sense of community, it is likely that many health disparities will dissipate. Social cohesion can reduce stress for residents if they know that there are neighbors who will look out for them and share their concerns. Furthermore, a cohesive neighborhood can more easily address problems such as crime and lack of necessary resources, which if addressed, can lead to positive outcomes for the entire West Bank District.

### **Impact Analysis**

While it is not possible to predict the health outcomes of the redevelopment with absolute certainty, the tables below illustrate the most likely possibilities, based on research and data. The first table outlines each focus area explained above and highlights the current conditions affecting the West Bank District and the potential conditions after the redevelopment. The table then provides the potential health impacts of the redevelopment changes. The second table offers more detail on the overall impact. The direction of impact indicates whether the changes will be positive (improve health),

negative (detract from health), uncertain, or have no effect. The magnitude specifies low impact (impacting very few or no people), medium impact (impacting a wider number of people), or high impact (impacting many people). This is relative to the population size of the West Bank District. The likelihood indicates whether it is likely, possible, unlikely, or uncertain that the impacts will occur as a result of the redevelopment. Finally, the quality of evidence illustrates the amount of data and research available in that area. Three asterisks (\*\*\*) indicate that there are many strong studies to support the anticipated effects, two asterisks (\*\*) indicate one or two strong studies to support the evidence, and one asterisk (\*) indicates that there are no clear studies, but the evidence is in line with the principles of public health (“HIA Report Guide”, 2010).

West Bank District Impact Analysis			
Indicator (identified in scoping phase)	Current Conditions	Current Proposal (abbreviated from current proposal table)	Affected Health Outcomes
Housing	52% of rental homes vs. 48% of owner-occupied homes	Develop mixed use housing near Madison St. and multiple-family housing along Oxford Street. City of Eau Claire Housing Division Rehabilitation Assistance program to assist in redeveloping homes in the West Bank District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead poisoning</li> <li>• Injury</li> <li>• Socio-economic status</li> </ul>
	High levels of lead and defects compared to the rest of the city	Intensified Housing Code Compliance Program administered by the Eau Claire City-County Health Department to eliminate serious health or safety hazards associated with deteriorated or unsafe housing.	
Green Space and Trails	One small park (Kessler’s Park)	Kessler Park may be sold for housing development and all current activities in that area will be moved to the newly developed park space along the river.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollution</li> <li>• Asthma</li> <li>• Physical activity</li> <li>• Obesity</li> <li>• Heart disease</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> </ul>
	A lot of undeveloped green space along the Chippewa River	Develop multi-use park space along the river.	
	No bike paths	Redevelop former railroad corridors into recreational walking and biking trails. This includes the trestle bridge that crosses the Chippewa river.	
Neighborhood Safety	An average of 6% of all crimes committed in Eau Claire occur in the West Bank District, while the population of the West Bank is less than 2% of the entire city	Parks will include high levels of activity, visibility, and lighting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime</li> <li>• Injury</li> <li>• Stress</li> <li>• Social cohesion</li> <li>• Physical activity</li> <li>• Obesity</li> <li>• Heart disease</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> </ul>
		The design and location of the buildings in the West Bank area will be developed to ensure security for residents and business owners	
	High perception of neighborhood crime	Utilize underground parking. Personal responsibility and collective actions of the population can be used to address problems within the community.	
Access to Fresh Foods	Closest grocery store is 2.5 miles away	Development of a year-round public market to include local vendors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diet</li> <li>• Obesity</li> <li>• Heart disease</li> </ul>
	Summer farmers’ market is offered once per week from May-October and it is 1 mile away		

	<p>Winter farmers' market is offered once per month during winter months and it is inside the West Bank District</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Support for local business</li> </ul>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Social Cohesion</b></p>	<p>No community gathering locations</p>	<p>Add additional performing or visual arts venues to develop an arts district and enhance the neighborhood image. The Children's Theater will remain and will serve as a gathering place for this community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community relationships</li> <li>• Economy</li> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Stress</li> </ul>
	<p>No Neighborhood Association</p>	<p>Create a neighborhood organization that can advocate for the interests of the community.</p>	

West Bank District Impact Analysis					
Indicator (identified in scoping phase)	Current Proposal (abbreviated from current proposal table)	Direction	Magnitude	Likelihood	Quality of Evidence
Housing	Develop mixed use housing near Madison St. and multiple-family housing along Oxford Street.	Uncertain	High	Likely	*
	City of Eau Claire Housing Division Rehabilitation Assistance program to assist in redeveloping homes in the West Bank District.	Positive	Low	Possible	**
	Intensified Housing Code Compliance Program administered by the Eau Claire City-County Health Department to eliminate serious health or safety hazards associated with deteriorated or unsafe housing.	Positive	Medium	Likely	**
Green Space and Trails	Kessler Park may be sold for housing development and all current activities in that area will be moved to the newly developed park space along the river.	Uncertain	Medium	Possible	*
	Develop multi-use park space along the river.	Positive	High	Likely	***
	Redevelop former railroad corridors into recreational walking and biking trails. This includes the trestle bridge that crosses the Chippewa river.	Positive	High	Likely	***
Neighborhood Safety	Parks will include high levels of activity, visibility, and lighting.	Positive	High	Possible	***
	The design and location of the buildings in the West Bank area will be developed to ensure security for residents and business owners	Positive	High	Possible	**
	Utilize underground parking.	Positive	Low	Possible	*
	Personal responsibility and collective actions of the population can be used to address problems within the community.	Uncertain	Medium	Unlikely	*
Access to Fresh Foods	Development of a year-round public market to include local vendors.	Positive	High	Possible	**
Social Cohesion	Add additional performing or visual arts venues to develop an arts district and enhance the neighborhood image. The Children’s Theater will remain and will serve as a gathering place for this community.	Positive	High	Possible	*
	Create a neighborhood organization that can advocate for the interests of the community.	Positive	High	Possible	**

## **West Bank Redevelopment HIA Step 4: Recommendations**

Based on the findings from and the analysis done during the Assessment Stage, recommendations were developed for each focus area. The recommendations took into consideration the current redevelopment plans, the potential for both positive and negative outcomes, and possible alternatives. The recommendations focused on how changes through the redevelopment can improve the health for the West Bank community, maximizing positive health impacts and minimizing negative health impacts. The recommendations are meant to complement the redevelopment process and facilitate health equity for all residents.

### **Recommendation 1: Housing**

1. Develop mixed use, mixed income housing options including rental properties, condos, family homes, and independent and assisted living options for seniors to ensure housing options for all potential community members.
2. Rehabilitate current homes to remove defects in the homes and abate any existing problems with lead to make current homes safer for residents.
3. Address the potential for gentrification and displacement of current residents through a tax program, a rent control program, or housing constructed specifically for lower income residents.

### **Recommendation 2: Green Space and Trails**

1. Construct bike/walking path at proposed location along the Chippewa River, connecting to trails across the river using the decommissioned railway bridge.
2. Develop park space along the Chippewa River for mixed use, including concerts, picnic space, fields for sports and recreation, and potential farmers' market and/or community gardens.
3. Promote walkability throughout the district through improved landscaping such as usable sidewalks, street lighting, and trees along the boulevard.

### **Recommendation 3: Neighborhood Safety**

1. Improve current street lighting and install more lighting where needed along all streets in the West Bank District to deter crime.
2. Add fences or other security measures around homes and buildings that have been or may be targets for crime.

3. Increase security measures around the methadone clinic. For example, install security cameras or employ a security guard during clinic hours.
4. Create a Neighborhood Watch Group for the West Bank area to address current crime and prevent future crime.

**Recommendation 4: Access to Fresh Foods**

1. Build grocery store in the West Bank District or within one mile of the neighborhood to improve access to fresh and affordable food.
2. Establish year round public market in the West Bank area to increase access to fresh foods and improve the economy through local shopping.
3. Implement community gardens in the park space along the Chippewa River so residents can grow their own produce.

**Recommendation 5: Social Cohesion**

1. Construct multiple community gathering locations in the West Bank District, including restaurants, bars, theaters, community centers, recreational centers, churches, and more to encourage community members to get to know each other and develop social structure throughout the neighborhood.
2. Develop a Neighborhood Association to address community issues and improve cohesion among residents in the area.

**Limitations**

Due to certain constraints, there were some limitations to this rapid HIA. Restrictions on time and resources prevented all areas of the redevelopment from being explored. By including a wider variety of topics, the HIA could encompass a more comprehensive view of the redevelopment. Below are examples of areas that were not fully studied in this HIA, but would be beneficial to explore for the future of the redevelopment.

**Research**

Because the West Bank District of Eau Claire is a relatively small area, specific quantitative data was difficult to ascertain. Data around population size, housing, crime, and health are often reported on a larger scale, such as zip code, census tract, or city. However, this data was pertinent to the HIA and

needed to be collected in order to provide a foundation for the research. As was explained in the data section, certain estimations were made in order to gather baseline data for the West Bank area.

However, all assumptions were based in research and it is reasonable to conclude that the data findings are accurate.

In addition to data limitations, there were also limitations in the types of data collection methods that were utilized. Due to the rapid nature of the HIA, it was not feasible to include certain methods of data collection. Certain methods require long-term planning and implementation. For example, community surveys or focus groups may have been beneficial to this process, but because of time restrictions, they were not possible and had to be excluded as options. The data collection methodologies and data sources that were utilized in this HIA (data collection, literature review, media analysis, and key informant interviews) were selected to provide the most information with limited resources. The data collection provided both qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources in order to best inform the recommendations.

### **Environmental Impacts**

The West Bank District is an area that used to be largely industrialized. This means that there are many brownfields in the area. A brownfield indicates the “presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant” (“Brownfields”, 2015). When a brownfield is present, it must be addressed and treated before redevelopment can take place. This ensures that no harmful health outcomes will occur from the potential contaminants. Although there are brownfields in the West Bank District, the HIA was not able to explore the possible impact on the redevelopment project. However, the city of Eau Claire is aware of the brownfields and has taken concrete steps toward addressing them.

In addition to the brownfields, there is also a snow dumping location in the West Bank area. This area is located along the Chippewa River and is used for plows to dump snow. While the effects of

this snow dumping location have not been studied, there is the potential for salt runoff into the soil and water. The redevelopment plans indicate that this will be moved to another location, outside of the West Bank area. Although a new location has not been determined, this will have to be taken into consideration when moving forward with the redevelopment.

### **Economic Impacts**

A redevelopment project has a large potential to positively impact the economy in the area. Developing new housing, commercial properties, and green space will likely improve the economy of the West Bank District. Furthermore, an improved economy can lead to added positive health outcomes for the community. Again, due to the constraints of this HIA, the potential economic impacts of the redevelopment were not fully explored. However, it may be beneficial to research the expected economic impacts of the redevelopment project in order to appeal to stakeholders within the community and further determine potential outcomes.

### **Community Input**

Involvement from the community is a very important part of HIAs, as well as redevelopment. Citizens and stakeholders provide unique and quality insight into their communities. Gathering their feedback is important to ensure that any changes made in the community reflect their needs. Community input was gathered for this HIA through key informant interviews. Specific stakeholders in the community were identified to provide feedback on the redevelopment project. The key informants acknowledged areas in the West Bank community that could not be identified through data analysis. The stakeholders identified problems in the community, as well as potential ideas for the redevelopment. Because this HIA was limited in scope, community input was not fully comprehensive. It is important to collect widespread community input, both from citizens and key stakeholders, to ensure that the redevelopment fits with the needs and desires of the community. There are many ways in which the community can be engaged in the redevelopment process. These include interviews, focus

groups, surveys, observation, narratives, and multimedia. Each method has strengths and weaknesses, but can be utilized to gather beneficial, qualitative data. Depending on the project, outcomes, and resources available, these methods can be used individually or in tandem to accumulate community input.

**Focus Groups.** Similar to the key informant interviews conducted in this HIA, focus groups are a great way to talk face-to-face with community members. Focus groups are typically small group discussions that can bring out new ideas and topics. A number of focus groups can be held, so as to include a diverse mix of the community. One focus group could include citizens, while another could be made up business owners, and a third could include elected officials. Each group would provide unique feedback and input on the redevelopment.

**Surveys.** Surveys can be used to gather a wider range of community feedback. Written or electronic surveys can be sent to households or made available in commercial locations. Community members can fill them out on their own time and can provide anonymous, honest feedback. Phone surveys can also be done with residents or business owners in the area. Surveys are a great tool to collect feedback from a high number of individuals within the community.

**Observation.** Observation can provide a significant amount of insight into a community. Observing individuals, behaviors, interactions, events, and daily life can highlight the strengths of a community, as well as areas of need. Community members may not be willing to talk about certain aspects of the community, but these could possibly be discovered through observation. Observation can also illustrate how individuals interact with one another and what the cultural norm is. It can be beneficial to learn these things before engaging the community in more in-depth data collection methods.

**Narratives.** Narratives provide a verbal or written account of an individual's lived experiences. This can take place through journals, autobiographical writing, acting, or verbal storytelling. Narratives

allow an inside view of a culture, through the stories of a community members. It includes the individual's feelings, views, and perspectives. The person who is reading or listening to the narrative can take part in the life of the storyteller, gaining insight into his or her experiences. Narratives provide cultural and normative expectations of a community and can help identify patterns when used alongside other data collection methods. The narratives can also provide insight into new topics which can be further explored. Narratives can be somewhat time consuming, biased, and hard to generalize, because they are focused on the experiences of one individual. However, narratives can provide depth and illustration to data collected through other methods.

**Multimedia.** The beliefs, values, and ideas of the community can also be gathered through multimedia sources such as film and photography. Asking individuals to capture their community through video or photos can provide a distinctive insight into their lives. It allows researchers to see the community on a personal level and understand what happens in everyday life. It can also provide insight into what the individuals' value and deem important in their lives. Film and photography offer a visual representation of daily life, which can enhance the information found through other data collection methods. Multimedia tools can also be used with community members who might not engage in more traditional data collection methods.

### **West Bank Redevelopment HIA Step 5: Reporting**

The final Rapid HIA Report will be presented to the City of Eau Claire in both a written format and through a verbal, in-person presentation. Each piece is meant to help the City of Eau Claire distribute the results of the HIA to the community and key stakeholders. Each piece is targeted to a specific audience and was developed to be clear, concise, and easily understood by the recipients. The final report and presentation will be given to Ned Noel, Eau Claire City Planner, Lieske Giese, Director-Health Officer of the Eau Claire Health Department, Shane Sanderson, Environmental Health Director of

the Eau Claire Health Department, and any other interested parties. This will include the Redevelopment Authority, the Mayo Clinic, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, members of the Healthy Communities Council, the Board of Health, and the City Council. The presentation is tentatively scheduled for January of 2015. The final audience will be determined as the event nears.

### **West Bank Redevelopment Step 6: Monitoring and Evaluation**

Because this was a rapid HIA conducted in a short time period, the monitoring and evaluation process is limited. Although this could not be completed as a part of the HIA process, an evaluation plan is provided below. This outline will assist in tracking outcomes and successes of the HIA through key indicators. The chart below provides indicators of success for each recommendation and assessment measures to determine the outcome. By looking at these indicators and measuring the impacts, it can be determined whether or not the HIA provided recommendations that were implemented, and whether those implementations facilitated positive health outcomes for the Eau Claire West Bank community.

<b>Outcome Evaluation Monitoring Plan</b>	
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Assessment Measures</b>
<b>HOUSING</b>	
Renter vs. owner-occupied housing	Number of rental homes vs. number of owned homes in the West Bank District: homeownership rate should be above 60% ("Wisconsin Quickfacts", 2014).
Availability of mixed income housing	Available homes should have range of home and rental costs
Safety of homes (defects and lead)	Number of home defects and lead levels in the West Bank should reflect the average rates for the City of Eau Claire
Socio-economic status of residents	Residents should represent a range of socio-economic statuses and incomes
<b>GREEN SPACE AND TRAILS</b>	
Bike and walking trails	Number of bike and walking trails constructed within the West Bank District
Parks and other green space	Amount of developed, accessible, and usable park space in the West Bank area

Walkability	Number and quality of usable sidewalks along all streets in the West Bank District
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY AND CRIME</b>	
Crime	Crime rates should reflect the population and size of the West Bank District
Neighborhood safety features	Number of fences and street lights constructed in the community
Programs to address crime	Development of a Neighborhood Watch Program or other program to address crime in the area
Resident perception	Perception of crime from residents and local business owners should not over represent the actual crime rate
<b>ACCESS TO FRESH FOODS</b>	
Grocery stores in the neighborhood or nearby	Location of nearest full service grocery store should be located within one mile of the West Bank District ("Food Deserts", 2014)
Affordability and availability of fresh foods	Fresh food should be easily accessible and food costs should represent the socio-economic status of residents
Farmers' markets and community gardens	Number of farmers' markets and community gardens implemented in the West Bank
<b>SOCIAL COHESION</b>	
Number and quality of community gathering places	Number of restaurants, bars, community centers, recreational centers, theaters, churches, etc. in the West Bank District
Neighborhood Association	Development of a formal West Bank Neighborhood Association

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the rapid HIA was shown to be a successful tool in providing recommendations to the West Bank Redevelopment Project. Each stage of the HIA gathered information and informed the recommendations that were ultimately made. The existing data and information gathered through the media analysis and key informant interviews established that health inequities exist in the West Bank District and that the redevelopment can help address these. The stakeholders involved and research gathered demonstrate that the rapid HIA was successful in developing recommendations to inform the West Bank redevelopment.

However, here were some challenges in the process which included the lack of data specific to the West Bank area. Because the district is so small, specific demographic data is hard to find.

However, data for a larger area was captured and could be applied to the West Bank. Additionally, there are many built environment changes and health outcomes that can be expected as a result of the redevelopment project. It is impossible to include all possible outcomes, so the 5 key focus areas were identified and researched.

It is impossible to state for certain how proposed changes to the West Bank will affect the health of the community. However, based on the existing data and newly gathered information, potential impacts were determined by systematically evaluating the available data and making educated estimates. It is reasonable to conclude that the impacts measured are the most likely outcomes of the redevelopment, based on the research. The recommendations are based on the most probable outcomes. If considered and implemented, it can be concluded that the changes made to the built environment of the West Bank through the redevelopment project will promote positive health outcomes for the community.

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