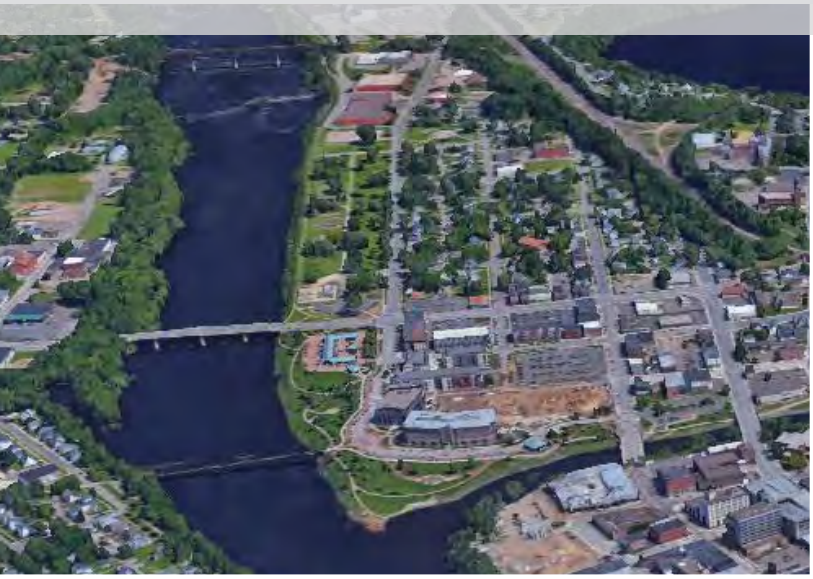


TRANSIT CENTER SITE SELECTION STUDY

CITY OF EAU CLAIRE

MAY 2016 FINAL REPORT

EAU CLAIRE TRANSIT

CITY OF Eau Claire

WCWRPC
WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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1 Introduction

BACKGROUND

Eau Claire Transit (ECT) is owned and operated by the City of Eau Claire (City), and serves the cities of Eau Claire and Altoona with 13 bus routes in a radial pulse system. In a radial pulse system, all (or most) routes radiate out ward from a central point, with all the buses meeting at that central point to facilitate transfers between routes so that passengers can reach their final destination with minimal waiting time. The transit center, currently serving as this central point for ECT, was built as a temporary structure over 30 years ago. This transit center is well beyond its useful life, does not meet passenger or system needs, and cannot accommodate even the existing volume of buses, much less any additional buses to serve future needs of the ECT system. The need for a new transit center has been recognized by the City for some time, however, funds have been largely unavailable and the project has not moved ahead until now. In 2015, the City contracted with West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to conduct a study that will help to move the concept of a new ECT transit center closer to reality.

PURPOSE

This study has several purposes: (1) to generally determine the type of structure that is desired for a new transit center, (2) to examine potential sites for the location of the desired structure, ultimately recommending 3-5 sites that would be most suitable, and (3) to present funding options for the construction of a new ECT transit center and the other uses to be included in the structure.

PROCESS

The planning process employed in this study involved a number of data gathering and analysis techniques and several opportunities for input from the public. A Transit Center Site Selection Study Advisory Committee was assembled, including representation from pertinent city departments (Community Development, Public Works, Downtown Eau Claire, Inc., Police Department, and Finance), Transit Commission, City Council, and bus drivers, as well as representatives of various groups with interest in transit services and downtown development. (See inside front cover for full Advisory Committee member list.)

The Advisory Committee's role was to provide input based on varied expertise of Committee members, and to review and give constructive comment on materials produced or distributed by the consultant. The committee was given materials to familiarize them with some 'best practices' for transit center development, a review of several local plans, and some background on the ECT system.

Early public involvement efforts included a survey of transit riders, concerning their transit trip destinations and desires for the transit center location, and an online survey for the general public, which was broadly advertised through the media. (These surveys can be found in Appendix A of this report, and results are discussed in the Analysis chapter.)

1 Introduction

A large pool of potential sites was compiled from a review of aerial photos of the downtown area. Parcel data was gathered from the City's data base, and discussions with ECT and other City staff helped to determine some of the basic needs of a future transit center site. Once the basic requirements were in place, the pool was reduced to nine potential sites, which were advanced for further analysis. The surveys, along with Advisory Committee input, were used to develop a set of use and space needs for the transit center, which contributed to a minimum "footprint" for the facility.

Additional analysis included a review of peer systems and their transit centers, as well as some review of non-peer transit centers to generate creativity. The consultant team, as well as the Advisory Committee ranked the nine sites based on the parameters that were laid out in previous exercises. A public open house was held later in the planning process to gather comment on the analysis and results, and to accept any additional input from the public on the future needs of a transit center.

The result of the combined analyses and the public input is a list of four sites which are suitable for the development of a multiuse structure to include a transit center that will accommodate future needs of the transit system, the community, and the transforming Eau Claire downtown.

Aerial View of Study Area

2 Analysis

REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANS

There are several local plans that cite the need for a new and more accommodating transit center in downtown Eau Claire. The long-running need for the transit center is recognized in a number of past comprehensive plan updates for the City. Downtown development plans have also noted the need and made relevant recommendations. Finally, the Transit Development Plan (TDP) for the Eau Claire Transit system is strong in its recommendations for a new facility. The most relevant of the recommendations from each of these documents are summarized below:

City of Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan

While past editions of the City of Eau Claire Comprehensive plan did include recommendations for a new transit center, and other recommendations that have a bearing on its development, the most recent edition was adopted during the development of this study (September, 2015) and was reviewed in the context of this effort.

Downtown Plan:

Objective 3 – Redevelopment and Remodeling: Support redevelopment of obsolescent, vacant, or underutilized properties and sites. (Downtown Plan, City of Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan-2015, p. 12-10) This objective specifically recommends that a study to determine the best location for a central bus transfer site, and the possible reuse of the current center location as a parking lot (interim) or development.

Objective 7 - Street System: Maintain a street system that supports land development while honoring the importance of walking and bicycling. (Downtown Plan, City of Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan, p. 12-25) This objective encourages the construction of a new multi-modal bus transfer station in the downtown that allows the integrated exchange of users among buses, autos, and bicycles.

Sustainability Chapter (Adopted April, 2009, amended September, 2015)

Objective 8 – Balanced Transportation: Increase mobility choices by enhancing other forms of transportation besides that for automobiles. Design transportation infrastructure efficiently, safely, with the environment in mind, and connect to other local and regional networks. (p. 15-23)

> *Policy #3 - Bus Transit: "...The Eau Claire Bus Station downtown is due for replacement. Federal funds are still lacking but when they are made available, sustainable features should be incorporated into the station design. The Transit Commission is already committed to investigating green technology options for the station. The actual site and design of the station may need future study. The study should include the feasibility of incorporating renewable energy systems in the facility." (p. 15-24)*

Objective 7 - Sustainable Development: Guide and promote development so that buildings and neighborhoods incorporate sustainable features. (p. 15-19)

> *Policy #2 - Green Buildings: "...Consider also requiring green building for all new City buildings and remodeling projects..."(p. 15-20)*

Policy #4 - Cool Roofs: "Consider a green roof pilot project on a City building to promote conservation. Green Roofs or Living Roofs are rooftops which typically have native grasses, flowers, shrubs and vegetation planted into a layer of soil, over a waterproof membrane. Other common features include gravel paths, patios, irrigation systems and photovoltaic arrays. Another option is white roofs, or those which have a white rooftop membrane that reflects solar radiation off the roof thereby reducing the building's thermal load." (p. 15-21)

Transportation System Plan (adopted April, 2009; amended September, 2015)

Objective 8 - Transit and Paratransit: Sustain and improve the local bus system that not only serves the transit-dependent population but also attracts riders who have a choice of travel modes. (p. 3-35)

Third Priority: Capital Investment: "...Very little transit service expansion can occur without first investing in new buses and buildings. New service will require additions to the fleet, so vehicle replacement is the highest priority. Additional service will require more space at the transfer facility and more space to store vehicles. A replacement ***downtown transit center*** *was in the early planning phases in 2015 and should be constructed to accommodate future growth of the system."(p. 3-36)*

Objective 10 - Passenger Rail: Help bring high-speed passenger rail service to Eau Claire. (p. 3-40)

Policy #2 - Station Location: If a high-speed rail route is chosen that includes Eau Claire, work to have the station located in downtown Eau Claire and accessible by Eau Claire Transit, such as near Banbury Place. (p. 3-40)

The City of Eau Claire Transit Development Plan (TDP)(adopted May, 2014)

Proposes route expansions, mainly to increase frequency, but also with the recommended addition of regional services to Chippewa Falls and Menomonie. This will necessitate additional space at the transfer center to accommodate as many as five more buses at transfer times. The TDP also notes that the transfer center is well past its useful life, additional capacity is needed, that the center should be downtown, and that further study is needed to determine the type of facility, its location and cost.

BEST PRACTICES

It is important to learn from the experience, both mistakes and successes, of past transit center projects. A document compiled by the State of Florida Department of Transportation Public Transit Office, and the National Center for Transit Research at the University of South Florida, entitled Developing Bus Transfer Facilities for Maximum Transit Agency and Community Benefit (December, 2004) reviews several transit center development projects and suggests a list of "Best Practices" to keep in mind when considering such an endeavor.

The suggestions included in this document, along with some gathered from other more recent and familiar projects, are discussed here.

2 Analysis

- Make the bus transfer facility consistent with a comprehensive plan for the area. While only a small portion of the community residents use the bus system, the transfer facility can meet the community's broader development goals, helping to make the project appealing and beneficial to the larger population, and encouraging further private investment in the area. Consider incorporating other downtown development needs into the transit center, and ensure that the design makes for a facility in which community can take pride.
- Private partners can, and are increasingly needed to play a prominent role. The City of Eau Claire has already recognized the power of private partners in the redevelopment and growth of the downtown. As federal and state funding sources have been reduced, creative funding options, most often involving the private sector, have become the norm. Furthermore, local employers and businesses realize that it is in their best interest to support and enhance alternative transportation modes to attract young professionals who view transit as part of a desirable place to live and work. The City of La Crosse learned that it is important to involve a developer, experienced in this type of public/private development, early in the design stages and throughout the project. Early commitment by potential commercial tenants or contributors can also help to secure some public funding.
- Community involvement is critical throughout the planning process. Involving citizens in the determination of what activities, services, and amenities will be included in the facility, and in its design, will help with local buy-in, and help to be sure the facility is beneficial to the community. An engaged community creates a sense of ownership, ultimately helping with security and maintenance.
- Provide opportunities for the facility to house activities that further identify the center with the community and the downtown. Some transit center facilities have been collocated with health care services, day care centers, office space, residential properties, and active public space. Some even include events and activities, such as a voting precinct, concerts, community meetings, and job fairs. The multiple uses attract people at different times of the day and night, and create an active space that feels safe and vital.
- Become part of the solution instead of a nuisance. Many on-street transfer facilities can be seen as a nuisance by neighboring businesses, with waiting passengers creating congestion on the sidewalks and with buses taking up valuable parking spaces in front of their stores. While the existing Eau Claire Transit transfer facility is off-street, and does not create all of these issues, there is still a sense that the transfer center is a nuisance and a place to be avoided, unless you are catching a bus. Instead, a transit center should be a positive asset for the downtown, encouraging growth in the business area, and part of the process of building a stronger community. Sometimes, by replacing an existing eyesore with a new facility, the benefits can be multiplied.
- Design matters. Rather than a utilitarian functional place for buses and passengers, a transfer station can be a source of civic pride, a reflection of the community's character, a visible landmark, or a gateway to the neighborhood. It should also, especially in light of Eau Claire's harsh winters, provide shelter, comfort, and convenience for passengers.
- The transfer facility should convey a sense of permanence, as if it belongs there, has been there, and will be there for many years to come. While some communities

have accomplished this by emulating the architecture of classic train stations, others utilize architectural features, such as brick or details that mirror surrounding buildings or historic structures in the area. This can be seen in the Grand River Station in La Crosse, as shown on page 16. Yet others design a very modern building of great prominence, avoiding short-lived, trendy designs.

- Non-transit related functions can successfully coexist at a bus transfer center. In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a Montessori School and the transit center are included within an office complex. While the school may not attract more transit riders, it does help to make the downtown a more attractive place to work for parents who desire daycare services for their children near their place of work. The Grand River Station in La Crosse includes market rate and low-income apartments that maintain a waiting list for occupancy. These are examples of ways that a transit center can positively contribute to community development, as well as help to garner funding from non-traditional sources.
- Thorough security and maintenance are essential. Transit centers carry a bad reputation as magnets for crime and general skullduggery. This label is largely undeserved, however, like any public space, a transit center does need to be secure and maintained. Some transit systems, usually in larger metro areas, have a dedicated police detail or security guards. Smaller cities typically use the occasional patrol of municipal police, and the presence of security cameras. Design should also consider security, keeping public areas as visible as possible. Again, including mixed uses within the structure fosters more activity at different times of day, increasing security at the site. Also like any other public space, maintenance is essential. Dirt and graffiti reduces the willingness of people to use the facility, or to consider it for other uses or events. A 'no tolerance' policy toward graffiti, vandalism, and crime will help to make the transit center a good neighbor and go a long way to maintain a desire for businesses, agencies, or residents, etc., to be tenants in the building, or to have it be a place that can attract other community activities. Having a transit administration presence is also found to help with issues of loitering, and the like. Locating at least some of the transit system office functions at the transit center, along with a convenient pass and ticket sales counter, can help to increase a feeling of security for passengers and the general public.
- Plan for growth. Several of the systems examined in the aforementioned study found that they had outgrown their bus transfer centers in just a few years and, in some cases, had not allowed for the growth within or adjacent to their center. The response of spilling out on to adjacent streets is not recommended as it can damage a community's high regard for the facility.

2 Analysis

RIDER SURVEY

A short survey was conducted on the ECT buses on a Tuesday in October, and yielded 163 useable responses. (The survey instrument can be viewed in Appendix A.) The information that was gained from the survey responses included if their trip involved the transfer center, and where the riders went, and how, if they did indeed utilize the transit center. They were also asked for their age and the purpose of their current trip as shown in Figures 1 and 2, respectively.

The riders were asked if they walked to their destination, from the transit center, transferred to another bus upon arriving at the transfer center, or if their trip did not include the transit center.

Those walking to their destination from the transit center included 7% of the respondents, while 46% transferred to another bus, and 47% did not go to the transit center on their trip. Of those that walked to their destination, the zone of their destination is shown on Figure 3. There was no correlation to be made between the age of respondents and any propensity to choose a transfer or walk to their destination. The distribution of trip purpose was roughly the same as the overall breakdown, with a slightly lower percentage walking to school from the transfer station and slightly more walking to work or shopping. This is not a surprise, considering there are not any schools in the defined zones, though work and shopping trip destinations are concentrated in the downtown area.

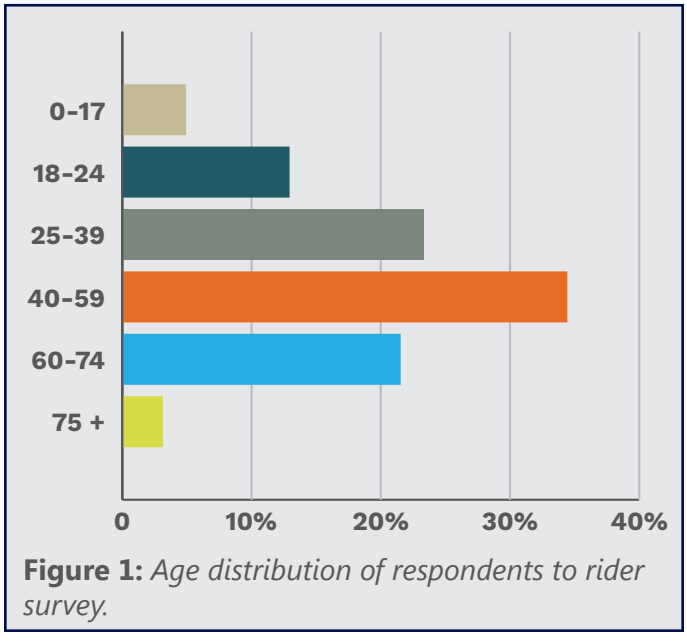


Figure 1: *Age distribution of respondents to rider survey.*

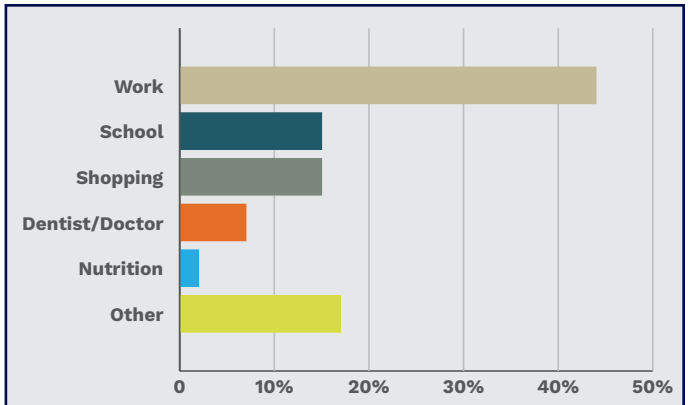
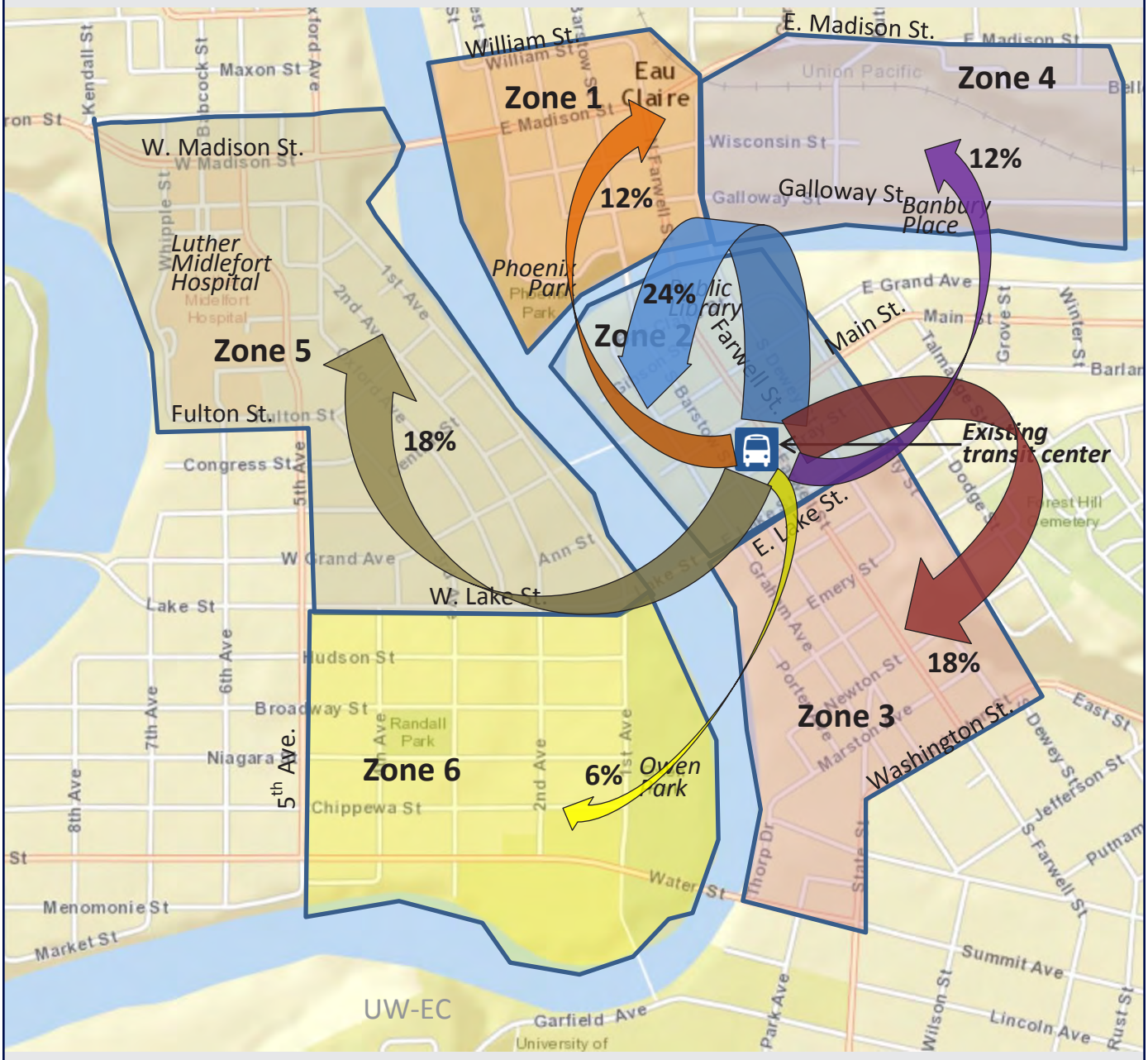


Figure 2: *Trip purpose of respondents to rider survey.*

Of those riders that transferred to another bus to complete their trip, nearly half (48%) had a destination outside of the defined downtown zones. (See Figure 4.) The breakdown of transferring riders by trip purpose is very nearly identical to that of all riders.

2 Analysis

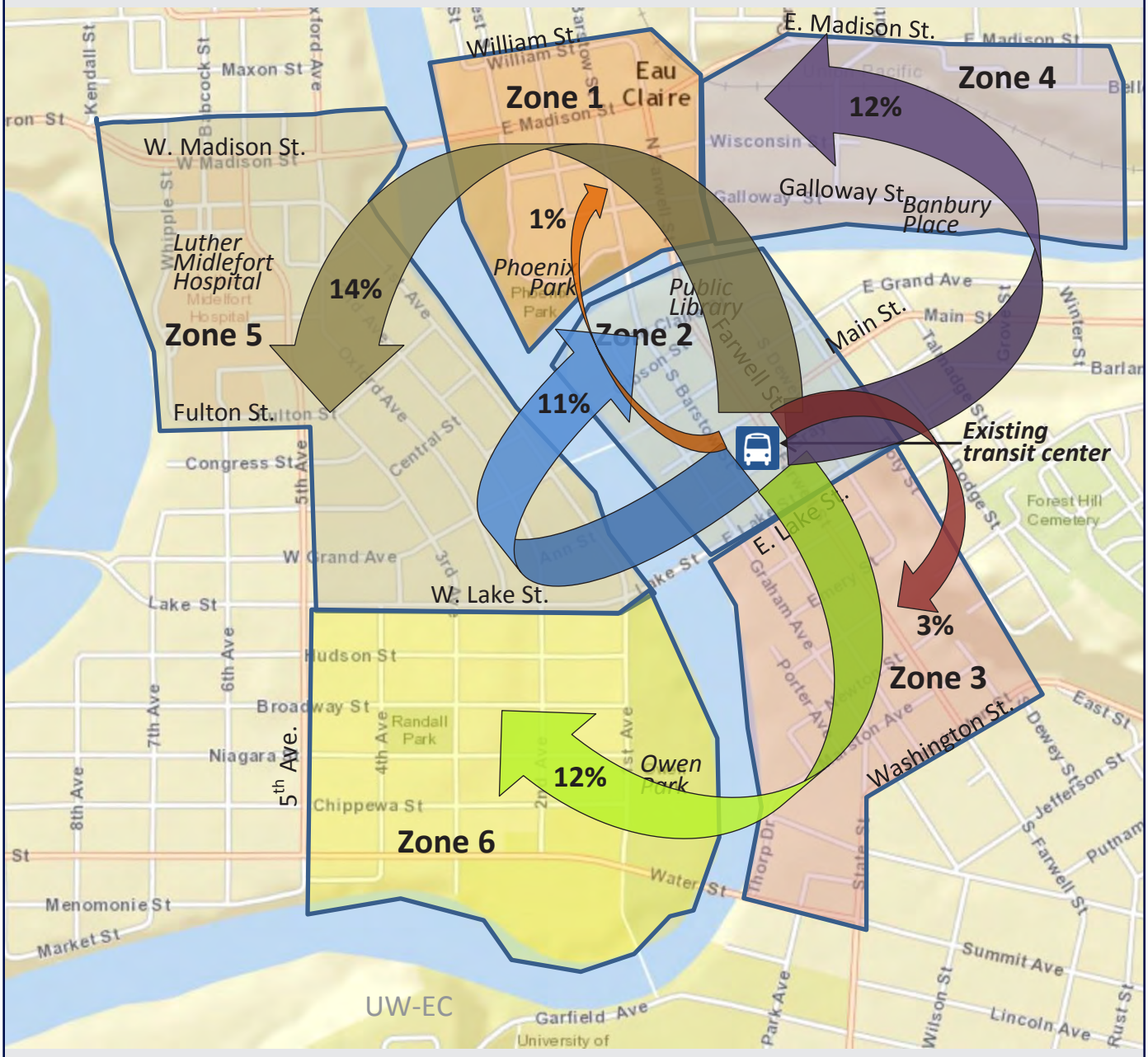
Figure 3: *Destinations of Respondents Who Walked From Transit Center (percent by zone).*



Note: 12% of those who walked to their destination, walked somewhere outside of the defined zones.

2 Analysis

Figure 4: *Destinations of Respondents Who Transferred to Another Bus at the Transit Center (percent by zone).*



Note: 48% of those who transferred to another bus to reach their destination, had a destination outside of the defined zones.

2 Analysis

ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey was conducted from October 1st through November 13th, 2015, and was well advertised through local newspapers, newsletters of partners, emails, and widely distributed flyers and posters. The online survey was more detailed than the rider survey, and was primarily directed at determining the public's desires for the transit center. Several demographic questions illustrated that there was a higher proportion of respondents in the 25-39 age cohort, than in the rider survey, likely due to the online delivery of the survey.

Those of age 60 and older were significantly under-represented in comparison to the rider survey. (See Figure 5.) Of the 234 responses to the question, 164 (70%) had ridden an ECT bus in the last five years. Of those 164 respondents, 36 of them (22%) rode to the transfer center and walked to their destination; 82 (50%) transferred to another bus at the transfer center; 35 (21%) started their trip downtown and traveled by bus to their destination elsewhere in the community; and 11 (7%) did not travel to the transfer center on their trip.

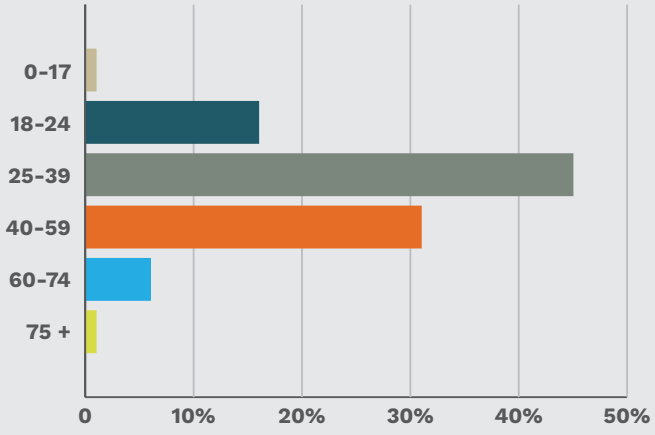


Figure 5: *Age distribution of respondents to online survey.*

The online survey takers were asked for their preferences on a number of items. First, they were asked to choose five of the most important amenities that should be included in the new transit center, in addition to heated/air conditioned indoor seating, ticket sales counter, public restrooms, and drivers' facilities, from list of 14 choices. The top 10 choices, and the percent of respondents that selected each option, are shown in Figure 6.

> **Other options given included:** changing area/ pay showers; car rental/ car share station; news stand; and transportation museum, with each making it into the top five by less than 15% of the respondents.

A similar ranking was completed by the Advisory Committee following one of their meetings. The ranking was surprisingly similar in terms of the top 10 amenities, with some re-ordering, as shown in the right hand column in Figure 7. The Advisory Committee did, however, place changing area/pay showers and car rental/car share station ahead of vending machines.

Shared uses in a multi-use building that also houses the transit center were presented and ranked much like the amenities, in the online survey, as well as by the Advisory Committee, as shown in Figure 7.

2 Analysis

Figure 6: *Online Survey and Advisory Committee Ranking of Amenities.*

**Changing area/ pay showers and car rental/car share station ranked 10 and 11 by the Advisory Committee.*

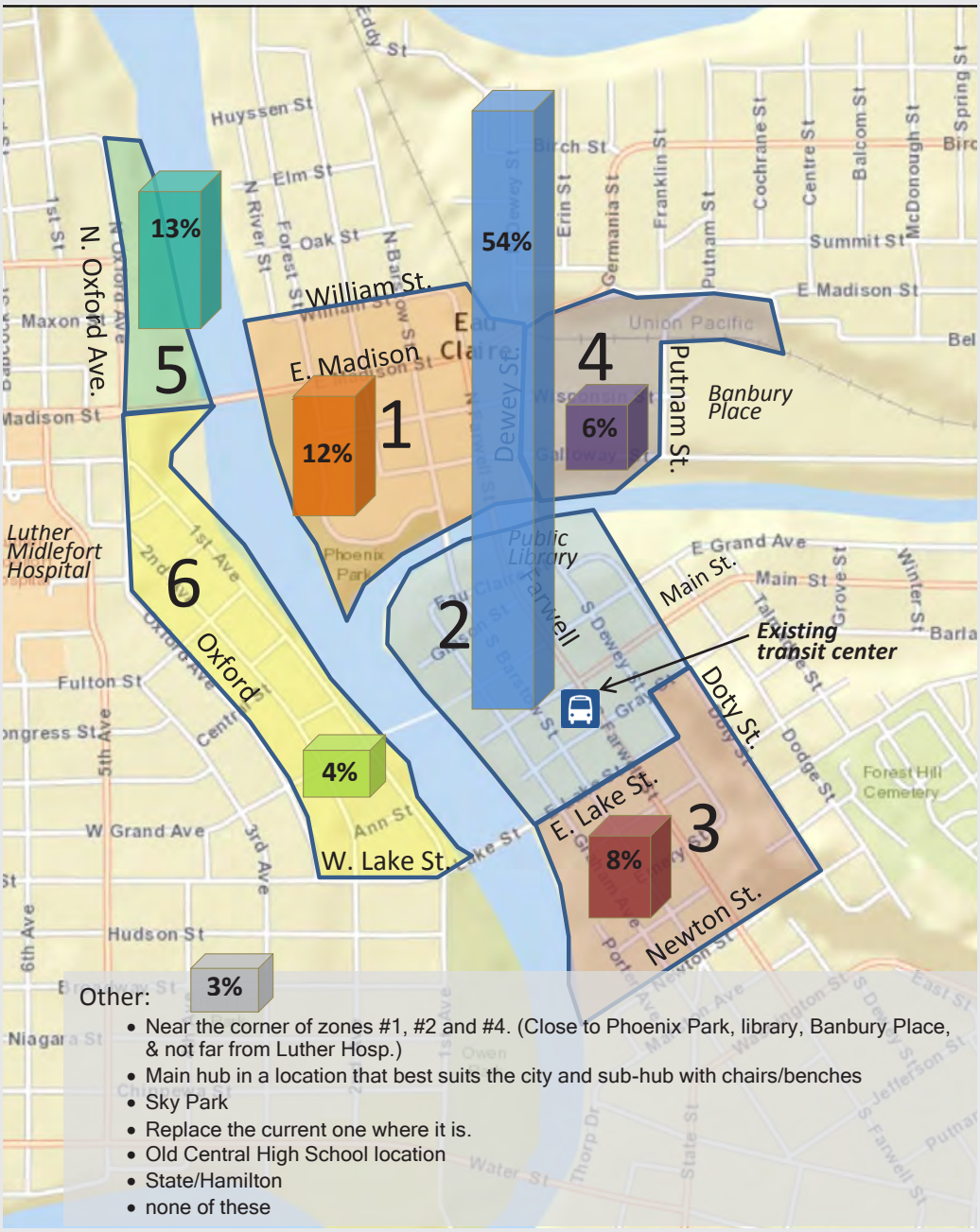
Online Survey Rank	Potential Amenities	Top 5 percentage selection rate	Advisory Committee Ranking
1	WIFI (wireless internet service)	79%	1
2	Outdoor seating with trees and benches	66%	6
3	Bicycle lockers/parking	54%	3
4	Electronic bus locator signs	49%	4
5	Vending machines	39%	12*
6	Bike share/Bicycle rental station	35%	5
7	ATM	34%	8
8	Cell phone charging station	31%	9
9	Visitors' Center office/kiosk	22%	2
10	Cab stand/Pedi-cab	15%	5

Figure 7: *Online Survey and Advisory Committee Ranking of Mixed Uses*

**Grocery store and retail were combined in the Advisory Committee ranking. The Advisory Committee ranked Fitness/Recreation Center as #9.*

Online Survey Rank	Potential Uses in Multi-use Building	Top 5 percentage selection rate	Advisory Committee Ranking
1	Restaurant/Diner/Coffee Shop	67%	5
2	Regional transportation hub	62%	1
3	Retail (to be privately leased)	43%	2*
4	Grocery store	40%	2*
5	Parking (ramp/spaces)	39%	4
6	Free clinic (medical/dental)	26%	10
7	Housing (apartments/condominiums)	21%	3
8	Community center/Senior center	18%	6
9	Government service offices	17%	8
10	Office space (to be privately leased)	16%	7

Figure 8: *Online Survey - Location Preference*



2 Analysis

The purpose of the survey questions related to amenities and shared uses is two-fold. First, the responses are intended to provide input to consider in future decisions by the City, and developers that may be contracted by the City, to take the transit center to the next steps of implementation. Secondly, and more important to this study, the responses help to determine the general size of structure needed, particularly uses that need to be, or are commonly, at the street level. This helps approximate the structure's footprint and size of parcel needed to serve the desired uses. It should be noted that other considerations must be given to actual space needs in the downtown.

For instance, additional space for general retail is not of particular need, however, downtown Eau Claire is a recognized food desert, and the need for a grocery store is commonly voiced. A significant amount of market rate apartments have been built in the downtown, particularly in the Phoenix Park area and in the new Haymarket Crossing just south of the Eau Claire River. These apartments have very low vacancy rates, and continue to fill up as fast as they are built. Additional market rate rental housing, and affordable rate housing continues to be in demand.

The online survey also asked for the respondents' preference for the location of the transit center within downtown Eau Claire. The down-town was divided into zones, and preference was distributed as shown on Figure 8.

The dominance of the respondents' preference for the location of the new transit center in zone 2, near the location of existing center, is not altogether surprising. In addition to a natural affinity for the familiar, a parcel across Farwell Street from the existing center (known as the Wood Motors lot) has long been discussed as a future transit center location. This is not intended to discount the noted preference in the survey, but to consider its dominance, which is disproportionate to the destination data, also gathered from the rider survey, which shows a less skewed distribution of destinations throughout the downtown, even for those walking from the transit center.

The two surveys, along with the input of the Advisory Committee, have provided valuable information about use of the current transit center and system, as well as needs and desires for the future transit center. Downtown Eau Claire is in the midst of a transformation, with the public playing key roles in many of the changes. How the public uses and relates to a new transit center is key in providing a viable transportation option to serve the changing profile of the area.

2 Analysis

PEER ANALYSIS

It is helpful to consider what other similar transit systems are doing with their transit centers. This can provide information on realistic approaches, as well as to learn more about how the projects were implemented, what issues arose in the process, and to benefit from the experience. The peer group analysis looked at transit systems in cities of similar size to Eau Claire, who had fairly recently built or rebuilt their transit centers. A general review of a larger number of transit systems and their transit centers resulted in a list of five transit centers that fit the basic idea of a multi-use and/or multi-modal transit center in a smaller urbanized area with a northern climate. The five are discussed here.

Billings, Montana: The MET Downtown Transfer Center opened in the spring of 2009. (See Figures 9 and 10.) It accommodates 15 buses and includes a driver break facility, administrative office, and a covered (not enclosed) passenger waiting area. While it is not a mixed-use building, it does employ some interesting "green" features warranting a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. A solar photovoltaic array reduces the center's electrical cost, and a vegetative roof over the administrative space and covered waiting prevents drastic heating and cooling of the rubber roof membrane, extending the life of the roof while helping to moderate temperatures in the building. The contracted architects worked closely with a citizen committee of MET riders, downtown property owners and others interested in the public transit system. The $3.2 million dollar facility was funded (80%) by a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) discretionary grant.

Figure 9: *MET Downtown Transfer Center, Billings, MT. Street View image: © 2016 Google.*

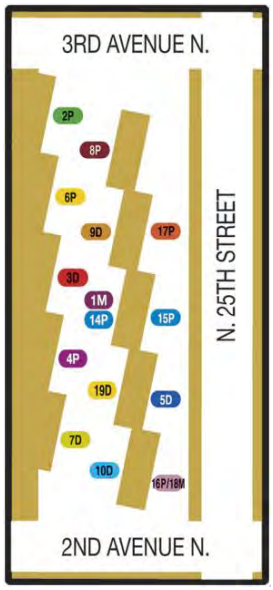


Figure 10: *Layout of MET Downtown Transfer Center, Billings, MT.*

Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Ground Transportation Center, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was originally built over 30 years ago, as a part of a mixed use development including a 15-story office tower, a public plaza, an apartment complex, and a Montessori School. The worst flood in Cedar Rapids' recorded history occurred in June of 2008, inundating the transportation center and school with as much as 14 feet of water, causing extensive damage. After several years of consideration, and the use of a temporary transfer facility on a different site, a renovation of the Ground Transportation Center was undertaken, with completion in December, 2013. The rehab

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of the Center was used as an opportunity to make a number of improvements to the facility including: eliminating the need for buses to reverse out of their staging area with the use of 'sawtooth' pattern, improved pedestrian flow in and around the Center; and accessibility improvements for passengers with disabilities; as well as energy efficiency, comfort, and technological upgrades in the indoor waiting area. The rehabilitation and renovation was funded by a combination of funding from the FTA ($7.4 million), Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) ($1.5 million), and Local Option Sales Tax revenues ($1.6 million). The bus staging area currently accommodates 12 buses.

The original development of the Ground Transportation Center (GTC) and the accompanying spaces, completed in 1983, was seen as a catalyst for redevelopment in the northern half of downtown Cedar Rapids. At a time when both private and public funding was scarce and interest rates were very high, creative funding and ownership schemes made the development possible. The City was able to attain federal funds to help build a multi-use center in an area in need of redevelopment. With no land costs and the foundation for the building built with the federal grant, the investment of an office developer was attained. Construction costs were further reduced by the City's issuance of industrial revenue bonds at half the market rate interest rates. This development spurred further redevelopment of the area, including a municipal library across the street from the GTC, built with mostly private donations. Taxes collected from the private development at the GTC was placed in a Tax Increment Financing

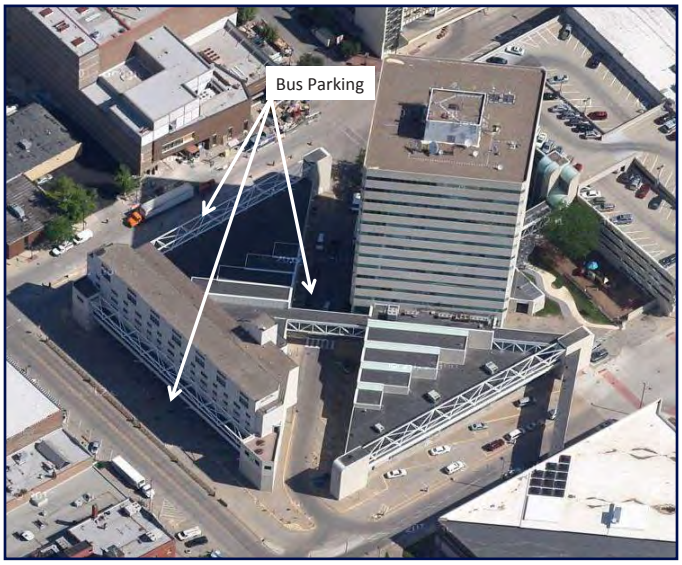


Figure 11: *Ground Transportation Center. Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Imagery: © 2016 Google.*

fund, which helped to build a riverwalk park and a science museum, refurbish a historic firehouse, and other public improvements, making the north end of the City's downtown attractive for further private investment.

The bus waiting area at the GTC was built with glass walls to make all the outside staging areas visible to passengers, no interior columns to obstruct those views, and 22-foot ceilings with more glass panels, making the space feel very open and bright. This helps with security, with clear visibility from the outside, and from the well-placed passenger information booth through the entire 4,000 square foot waiting area. The waiting area contains food vending machines, a customer service agent that sells tickets and passes, public restrooms, a spacious break room for drivers, and transit supervisor offices. For its time, the GTC also contained some pretty advanced technology, including a real-time bus information monitor letting waiting passengers

know when their bus is arriving. A separate, smaller waiting area serves passengers of the intercity bus services that use the GTC as their depot, providing a seamless trip for regional travel beyond the Cedar Rapids area.

Holland, Michigan: The transfer center for the Macatawa Area Express (MAX), the public transit system for the Holland-Zeeland area, is known as the Padnos Transportation Center. The structure is a renovated railroad station, originally built in 1926, on the northeast fringe of Holland's down-town. The center was abandoned in 1971, but a series of renovations led to its rededication in 1991 as a true multi-modal transportation center serving Amtrak trains, Indian Trails intercity bus lines, and the as the transfer facility for MAX's eight route transit system and ADA paratransit services. The center illustrates the potential for transit and passenger rail stations to collocate, providing for easy access to the area for those arriving by train. A waiting area, customer service office, and training/ meeting rooms are provided in the Center.

La Crosse, Wisconsin: Grand River Station is a mixed use, 7-story building in downtown La Crosse that houses a transit center, a parking lot, four floors of market rate and low-income apartments, art studios, office and retail space, and a number of environmentally sustainable features, such as a green roof which manages runoff, while providing open space for the tenants. The transit center has a historic train station themed waiting area with public restrooms, customer service counter, and access to an indoor bus staging area, as well as intercity bus connections. Construction was completed in 2010, through a very complex collaborative public-private effort.

Grand River Station was built at a cost of approximately $32 million, with $2.3 million from federal economic stimulus dollars (FTA) and $8.8 million in FTA capital funds for the transit center and parking portions; a $3.6 million loan from the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA); and $9.5 million in Federal Housing Stimulus Funds, and City funding of $8.5 million in

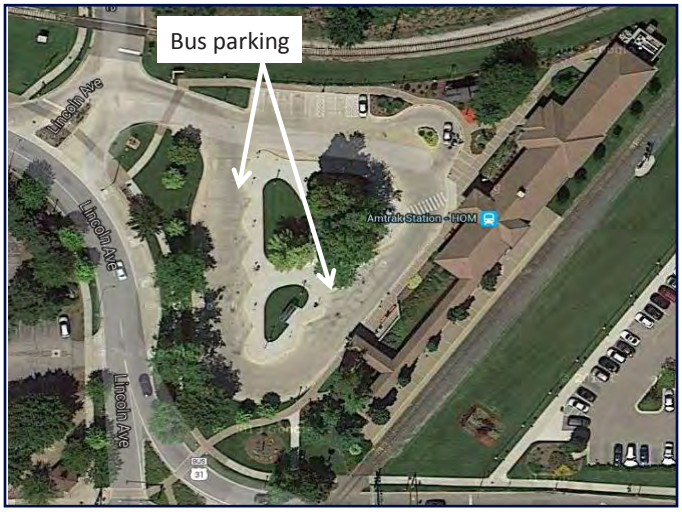


Figure 12: *Padnos Transportation Center. Holland, Michigan. Imagery: © 2016 DigitalGlobe.*

Figure 13: *MTU Transit Center at Grand River Station. La Crosse, WI. Street View image © 2016 Google*

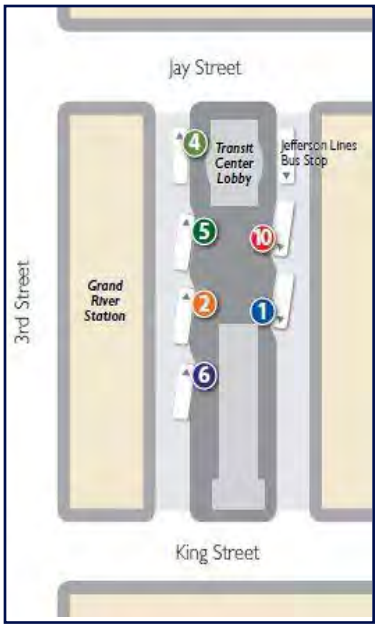


Figure 14: *La Crosse Transit Center Layout.*

Bond/TIF Funds. The City actually sold the interior space of floors 3 through 7 to the developer with the agreement of developing a mix of low-income and market-rate apartments. The retail space is owned by the City and leased to the developer, providing revenue to the Transit & Parking Utility.

The City of La Crosse staff learned a number of valuable lessons during the implementation of the Grand River Station project. They are sure that it would have been most advantageous to engage a developer with experience in the complex funding options and scenarios for this type of project, involving local, state, and federal programs, along with private investment, even before project design. Doing so may have saved the project a number of delays and funding complications, and likely lowered the final project cost.

In the end, the project has been a success in terms of the transit center and the occupancy of the apartments, with waiting lists a common situation. Filling retail and office space has been a bit more effort, but a number of very stable office uses are now established in the Grand River Station.

Figure 15: *Grand River Station - Green Roof. Photo: WCWRPC, 2015.*

SITE RANKING

Parameters: Before potential sites for a new ECT Transit Center could be determined and further reviewed, some parameters for defining a potential site needed to be established. After examining the lessons learned from the peer review and 'best practices', and consideration of input from the surveys, Advisory Committee, City staff, and other consulted parties, basic needs of the transit center and the requirements for the desired uses to be included in the structure were roughly delineated. This was done, not to form the design or contents or the structure, but to estimate space needs, particularly of the ground floor uses, to determine a minimum lot size and characteristics for candidate parcels.

Absolute requirements for the candidate parcels include: location within the downtown area delineated for the study (Figure 16); a minimum area of 48,000

square feet (determined through an exercise resulting in the diagram shown in Figure 18); the potential for at least two ingress/egress points to accommodate the flow of buses; and the ability to meet the needs and requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Nine sites were identified as meeting these basic parameters (see Figure 19), and were advanced to the next stage of analysis. Each of the nine sites, identified and described in Figure 20, was then rated based on twenty additional criteria, listed in the table below:

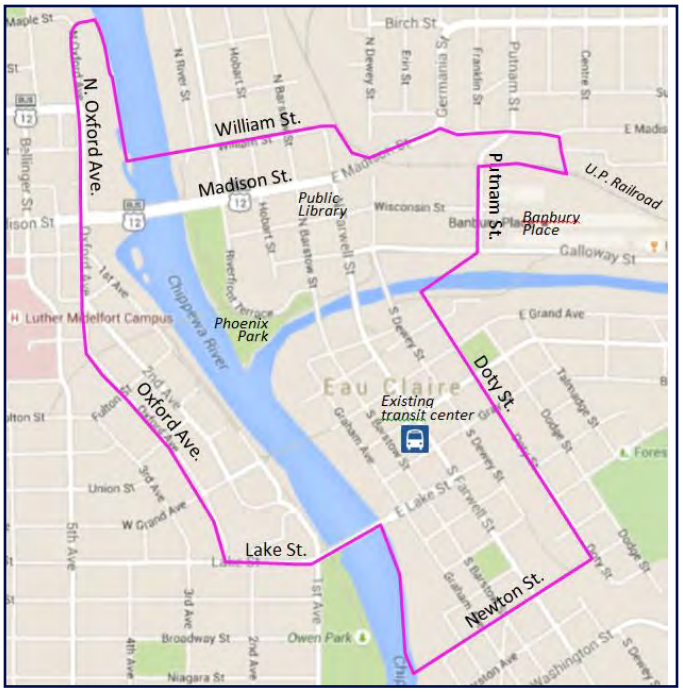
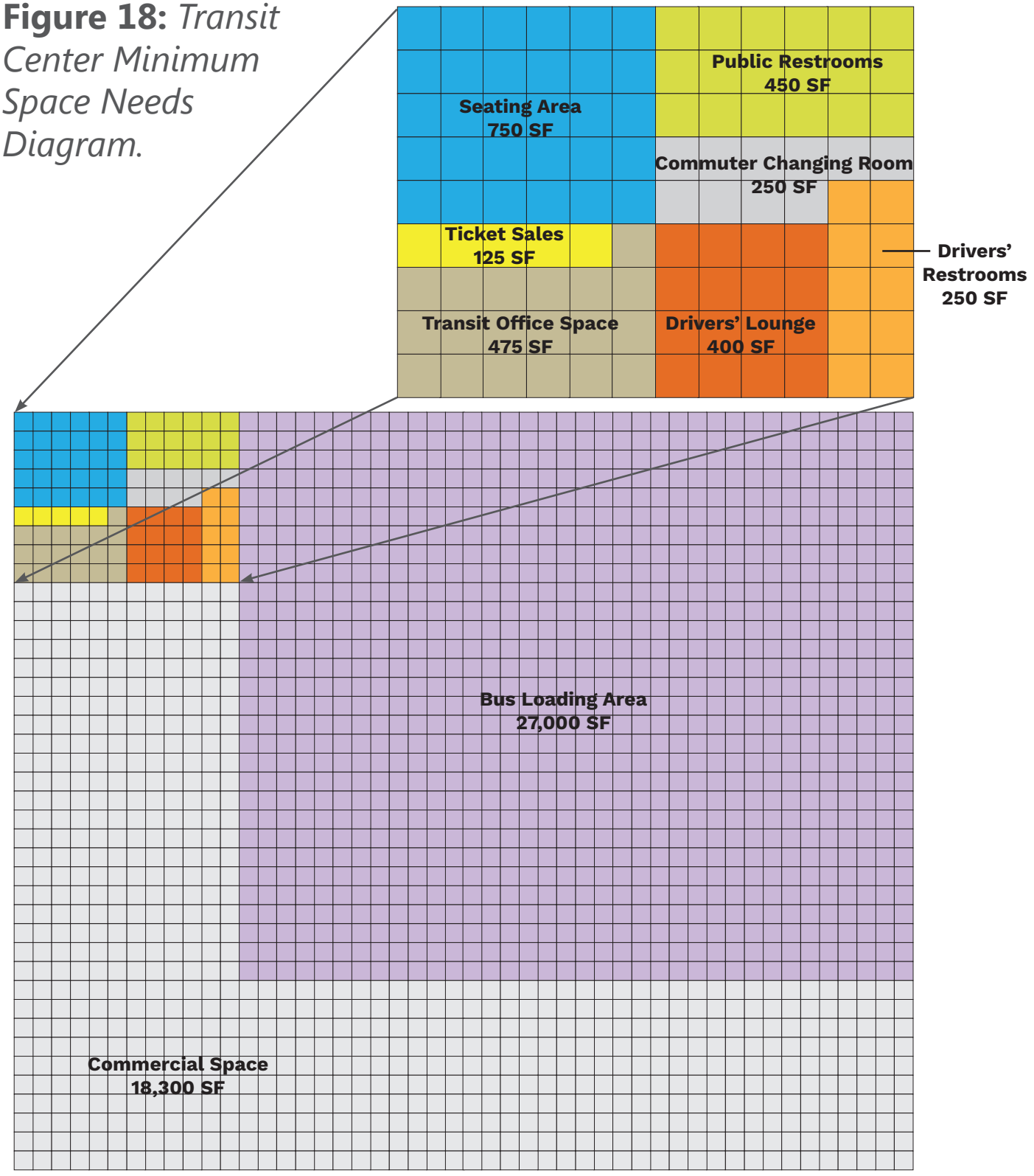


Figure 16: *Study Area - Downtown Eau Claire.*

Figure 17: *Additional rating criteria.*

Space	Environment
• Room to grow • Ground floor area • For outdoor commercial use • For outdoor public use	• Best use of land • Compatibility with existing plans • Compatibility with existing zoning • Suitability for green applications • Hist./Cultural value of existing structures • Structural integrity of existing structures • Environmental sensitivity
System Logistics	**Cost**
• Suitability for route structure • Ease of bus access to site • Central to activity centers • Integration with other modes	• Relocation • Demolition • Site improvements • Infrastructure (including road improvements) • Land acquisition (market value)

Figure 18: *Transit Center Minimum Space Needs Diagram.*



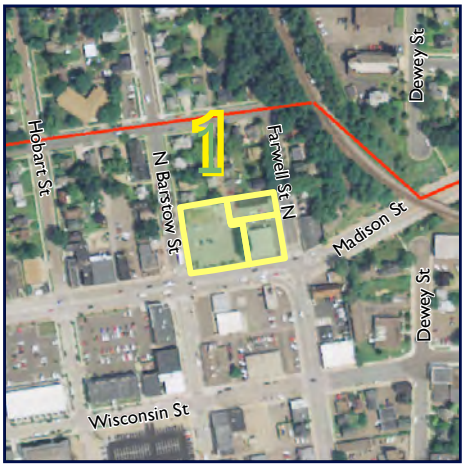
2 Analysis

Figure 19: *Map of potential sites for analysis.*

Figure 20: *Individual Site Data: Pages 21-23.*

Site 1

Parcels	3	
Owners	3	
Residential	0	
Businesses	1	office
	1	service garage
Area (SF)	55,076	
Total Market Value	$670,300	
Vacant Parcels	1	commercial parking lot



Site 2

Parcels	6	
Owners	4	
Residential	0	
Businesses	1	convenience store
	2	offices
Area (SF)	69,438	
Total Market Value*	$904,600	
Vacant Parcels	3	commercial parking lots

Note: *Total Market Value does not include the western Dairyland (exempt) parcel.

Site 3

Parcels	15	
Owners	7	
Residential	1	duplex
Businesses	4	retail stores
	2	offices
	1	barber shop/beauty
	1	tavern
	1	storage warehouse
	1	exempt org. office
	1	industrial-manufacturing
Area (SF)	69,573	
Total Market Value*	$1,582,500	
Vacant Parcels	3	commercial parking lots

Note: *The Hmong Mutual Assistance (exempt) parcel does not have a market value available. The last sale price for this parcel was used in the Total Market Value figure.

Figure 20, continued

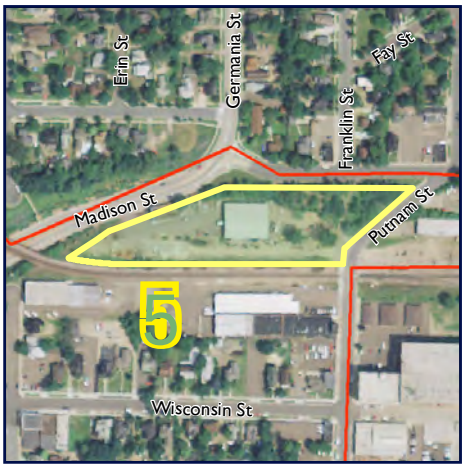
Site 4

Parcels	7	
Owners	2	
Residential	0	
Businesses	2	taverns
	1	retail store
	1	industrial-manufacturing
Area (SF)	94,238	
Total Market Value	$991,200	
Vacant Parcels	1	commercial propery
	1	city-owned parcel
	1	city-owned parking lot

Note: *Total Market Value not available for the two city-owned parcels (exempt).

Site 5

Parcels	1	
Owners	1	
Residential	0	
Businesses	1	office
	1	storage warehouse
Area (SF)	155,585	
Total Market Value	$341,300	
Vacant Parcels	0	



Site 6

Parcels	2	
Owners	2	
Residential	0	
Businesses	3	storage warehouse
Area (SF)	69,132	
Total Market Value	$331,100	
Vacant Parcels	0	

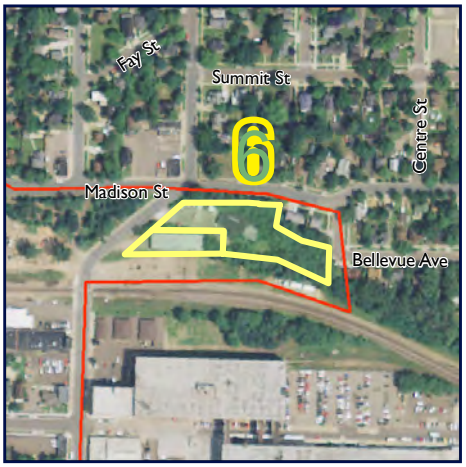
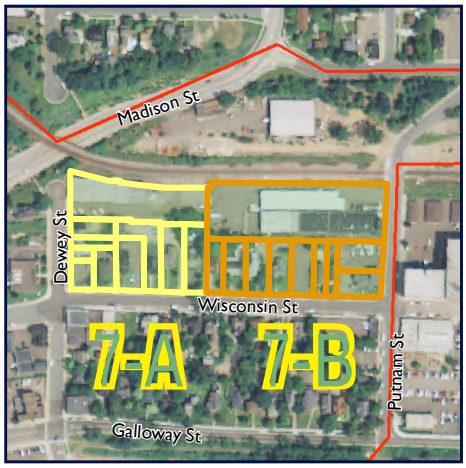


Figure 20, continued

Site 7

Parcels	20	
Owners	16	
Residential	2	triplexes
	3	duplexes (1 vacant)
	5	4-plexes
	4	single family
	1	boarding house
Businesses	1	industrial-warehouse
	1	hotel
	2	storage warehouses
Area (SF)	295,382	
Total Market Value	$3,185,000	
Vacant Parcels	2	commercial parking lots



Site 8

Parcels	2	
Owners	1	
Residential	0	
Businesses	1	office
Area (SF)	58,657	
Total Market Value	$1,261,800	
Vacant Parcels	1	commercial parking lot

Site 9

Parcels	2	
Owners	1	
Residential	0	
Businesses	0	
Area (SF)	57,062	
Total Market Value*	$0	
Vacant Parcels	2	city owned parking lots

Note: *Total Market Value does not include the two public-government (exempt) parcels.

2 Analysis

Criteria			Potential Sites								
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Space	1	Room to Grow	0	+1	+1	+1	0	0	+1	0	0
	2	ground floor area	+1	+1	+1	+1	0	0	+1	+1	+1
	3	space for outdoor commercial use	0	+1	+1	+1	0	0	+1	+1	+1
	4	space for outdoor public use	-1	+1	+1	+1	0	0	+1	+1	+1
System logistics	5	Suitability for route structure	0	0	+1	+1	-1	-1	0	0	+1
	6	Ease of bus access to site	0	0	+1	+1	-1	-1	+1	-1	+1
	7	Location - central to activity centers	-1	0	+1	+1	-1	-1	-1	+1	+1
	8	Integration with other modes	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost	9	Cost - Relocation	0	0	-1	0	+1	+1	-1	0	+1
	10	Cost - Demolition	0	-1	-1	0	+1	+1	-1	0	+1
	11	Cost - Site improvements	0	0	+1	+1	-1	-1	0	0	+1
	12	Cost - Infrastructure (incl. road improv.)	-1	0	+1	+1	0	0	+1	0	-1
	13	Cost - land acquisition (market value)	0	0	-1	0	+1	+1	-1	-1	+1
Environ-ment	14	Best use of land	+1	+1	+1	+1	0	0	+1	0	+1
	15	Compatibility with existing plans	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
	16	Compatibility with existing zoning	+1	+1	+1	+1	0	0	+1	+1	+1
	17	Suitability for green applications	+1	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	+1	+1	+1
	18	Hist./Cultural value of existing structures	+1	+1	0	-1	+1	+1	+1	0	0
	19	Structural integrity of existing structures	0	0	+1	0	0	0	0	0	+1
	20	Environmental sensitivity	+1	-1	+1	+1	0	0	+1	+1	+1
TOTAL			3	7	12	13	1	2	8	6	15

+1 = +1 0 = 0 -1 = -1

Figure 21: *Ranking of potential sites.*

The nine potential sites for the transit center were each rated based on the criteria shown on page 18 (Figure 17). The results are shown in Figure 21, above. Each site received a good (green dot), neutral (yellow dot), or bad (red dot) score for each of the criteria. Then each dot was assigned with a +1, 0, or -1 value, respectively, and the values were totaled to determine a list of the top four sites to undergo more specific analysis. The next level of analysis involved a general environmental scan of the top four sites, review of their strengths and weaknesses, and consideration of estimated acquisition, relocation, and demolition costs necessary.

MORE DETAILED ANALYSIS

Sites 3, 4, 7, and 9 were ranked as the top four most appropriate sites as per the ranking criteria utilized by the Transit Center Site Selection Study Advisory Committee and consultant staff. The following section provides more detailed information on each. It should be noted that at this point each should be considered equal as the ranking criteria was meant to be a way to determine most suitable sites, but not necessarily which would be best in a priority order. In selecting the most appropriate site, the City Council will need to take these and a variety of other factors into consideration.

The market value data was obtained from the 2015 Property Tax Records maintained by Eau Claire County. The listed 2015 market value for all parcels within each site were summed to arrive at the total market value for each of the sites. Residential and business relocation costs, as well as demolition costs, were calculated by the City of Eau Claire Project and Acquisition Coordinator based on recent experience in working on similar projects. A

'worst case' scenario was used in that it was assumed that the maximum payments would be made. It was assumed that all properties were occupied and would be eligible for relocation. Both building and parking lot demolition are included in the demolition costs. If historic properties are located on a site, the cost of demolishing those properties was not included as their demolition would not be the preferred action.

SITE 3

Site 3 is located in downtown Eau Claire bordered by North Barstow Street, Wisconsin Street, Farwell Street South, and Galloway Street. The site takes up the whole city block and is directly to the east of an existing surface parking lot which is planned to develop as commercial and residential mixed use. It is also northeast diagonally from a new parking structure being constructed by the City.

Figure 22: *Site 3.*

The site contains 69,573 square feet including 15 parcels with a mix of residential and business units as follows: 4 retail stores, 1 duplex rental structure, 2 office buildings, 1 barber shop/beauty salon, 1 tavern, 1 industrial/ warehouse, 1 tax-exempt organization building, 1 industrial/ manu-facturing facility, and 3 commercial parking lots. The 15 parcels have 7 owners.

If the site were to be purchased for the transit center, it is estimated that the residential and business relocation costs for the properties would be approximately $791,000. Demolition costs would be approximately $319,900. The market value of the site is estimated to be $1,582,500.

Total acquisition, relocation, and demolition cost would be $2,693,400.

The site has no identified environmental concerns, is not located in the floodplain, and does not contain slopes of over 20%.

Strengths:

- The site has adequate room for existing transit center needs with some room for growth.
- The site is well suited for the transit center, mixed use, and transit oriented development (TOD).
- Bordering city streets on four sides creates excellent options for the ingress and egress of buses.
- Being closer to the central downtown area with greater pedestrian traffic creates the potential for a successful and thriving mixed-used facility.
- The area has proven to be attractive for residential development should the facility include rental units.

- Existing rental units in the downtown area primarily charge market rate rents. If low income apartments are included in the transit center, it will create a healthy and appropriate mix of rental options in the vicinity. It will also provide accessibility to products and services for persons of all incomes.
- The site will require less adjustment to existing bus routes and the existing radial pulse system than Site 7.
- The transit center could spur redevelopment in an area that has been targeted for improvement.
- The site is near a city-owned parking structure that is in the process of being constructed. The close proximity to that structure may mean that a smaller amount of parking would be required at the transfer center facility.
- The site is near the bicycle trail which provides a convenient multimodal connection.
- The area's higher volume of pedestrian traffic, services, and places of work could increase bus ridership.
- The site does not have any identified environmental concerns.
- The site fits within the parameters of existing City plans and zoning.
- An existing nonprofit in the area could be incorporated into the facility creating an opportunity for an anchor tenant.

Weaknesses:

- The site has one of the highest acquisition, relocation, and demolition costs of the four sites.
- Because of the site's location near Phoenix Park, the Confluence project, and other new development projects, it is possible that this area would redevelop on its own without the transit center and the accompanying city injection of funding.
- The site is not located near rail but a connection could be made with a downtown circular service.
- The need to purchase parcels from a large number of owners adds to the project timeline and complexity.

SITE 4

Site 4 is located in central downtown, one block south of Site 3, bordered by North Barstow Street, Galloway Street, Farwell Street, and the Eau Claire River. Like Site 3, it takes up one full city block. The southern portion of the site is a city-owned parking lot adjacent to the bicycle trail system. It also is located southwest of an existing surface parking lot planned to develop as commercial and residential mixed use, and across the street from a new parking structure being constructed by the City.

Figure 23: *Site 4.*

2 Analysis

The site contains 94,238 square feet, the second largest of the top four sites, with 46,238 more square feet available than the minimum required 48,000 square feet. The site contains 7 parcels and a mix of business units as follows: 2 taverns, 1 retail store, 1 vacant commercial facility, 1 industrial/manufacturing facility, 1 restaurant, and 1 tax-exempt city-owned parking lot. The 7 parcels have two owners. The site also contains two city owned parcels.

If the site were to be purchased for the transit center, it is estimated that the business relocation costs for the property owners would be approximately $135,000. Demolition costs would be approximately $213,300. The market value of the site is estimated to be $991,200.

Total acquisition, relocation and demolition cost would be $1,339,500.

It should be noted that at 409-417 Galloway Street is a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It would be preferable if this historic structure could be incorporated into the design of the transit center verses being demolished. For this reason the cost of demolishing the property was not included in the above demolition figure.

The 100-year floodplain is located along the multi-use trail, below the parking lot. There is also a 20 percent or greater slope located between the trail and parking lot. There are no other identified environmental concerns.

Strengths:

- The site has adequate room for existing transit center needs with additional room for growth.
- The site is well suited for the transit center, mixed uses, and transit oriented development (TOD).
- Being closer to the central downtown area with greater pedestrian traffic creates the potential for a successful and thriving mixed-use facility.
- The area has proven to be attractive for residential development should the facility include rental units.
- Existing rental units in the downtown area primarily charge market-rate rents. If low-income apartments are included in the transit center, it will create a healthy and appropriate mix of rental options in the downtown area. It will also provide accessibility to products and services for persons of all incomes.
- The site is located on a state bicycle trail creating alternative transportation connections.
- The site is across the street (North Barstow Street) from a city owned parking structure that is in the process of being constructed. The close proximity to that structure may mean that a smaller amount of parking would be required at the transit center facility.
- The site is closer than Site 7 or 3 to the central downtown activity center and better accommodate the existing route structure.
- The acquisition, relocation, and demolition costs for this site would be less than sites 7 or 3; but more than site 9.
- With some creativity the site could provide good ingress and egress points.
- Historic properties located at 409-417 Galloway Street could be incorporated into the transfer center structure making a unique and inviting facility.
- The City of Eau Claire owns a portion of the site, with the remainder owned by just two parties making the acquisition process less complicated than Sites 7 or 3.

- The site does not have any identified environmental concerns.
- The site fits within the parameters of existing City plans and zoning.

Weaknesses:

- Although less costly than Sites 7 or 3, this site is more costly than Site 9.
- Because of the site's location near Phoenix Park, the Confluence project, and other new development, it is possible that the area would redevelop on its own without the transit center and accompanying city injection of funding.
- The location of properties included on the National Register of Historic Properties complicates the project.
- The site is not located near rail but a connection could be made with a downtown circular service.

SITE 7

Site 7 is located in the northeastern downtown area to the west of the Banbury Place complex. It is bordered by Dewey Street, Union Pacific Railroad/Madison Street, Putnam Street, and Wisconsin Street. Because the site is quite large, for purposes of this analysis it was divided into parts, 7A and 7B. Each of the two subdivisions would be large enough to house the transit center facility. Of particular note for this site is the proximity to rail and the potential for the transit center to serve the future dual role as a passenger rail station.

<u>Site 7A</u>
Site 7A is the western one-half of Site 7 as shown in the photo. The site contains 117,055 square feet; 69,055 more than the required 48,000 square feet. The site contains 10 parcels with a mix of residential and business

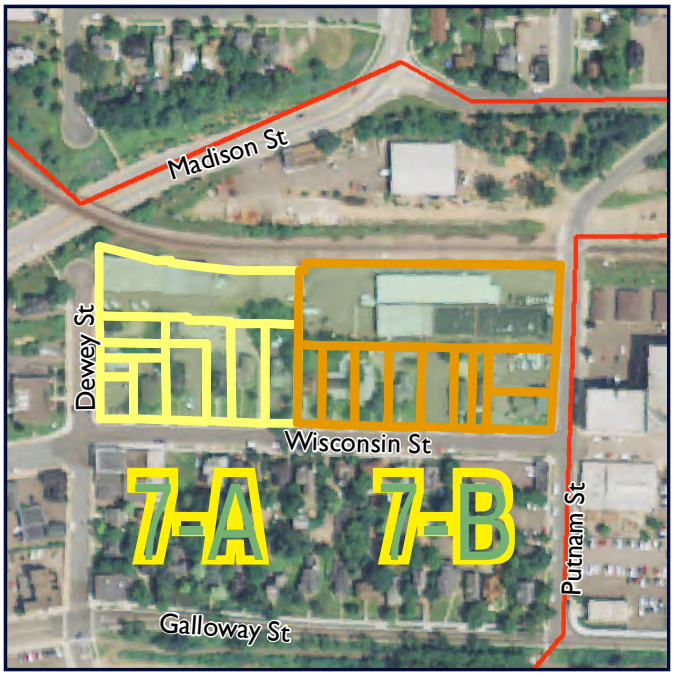


Figure 24: *Site 7A, 7B.*

units as follows: 3 fourplex rental buildings, 2 triplex rental buildings, 1 duplex rental buildings, 2 single family homes, 1 industrial manufacturing facility, and one storage warehouse. The 10 parcels have 9 owners.

If the site were to be purchased for the transit center, it is estimated that the residential and business relocation costs for the property owners would be approximately $564,000. Demolition costs would be approximately $248,000. The market value of the site is estimated to be $1,308,800.

Total acquisition, relocation, and demolition cost would be $2,120,800.

The site has no identified environmental concerns, is not located in the floodplain, and does not contain slopes of over 20%.

It does however contain uneven terrain which could be considered as part of the building design, or dealt with in preparing the site for construction.

Site 7B

Site 7B is the eastern one-half of Site 7 as shown in the photo. This site contains 176,295 square feet; 128,295 more than the required 48,000 square feet. The site contains 10 parcels including: 2 fourplex rental buildings, 2 duplex rental buildings, 2 single family houses (1 being a boarding house), 1 hotel, 1 storage warehouse and 2 commercial parking lots. The residential and business units have 8 owners.

If the site were to be purchased for the transit center, it is estimated that the residential and business relocation costs for the property owners would be approximately $1,138,000. Demolition costs would be approximately $418,600. The market value of the area is estimated to be $1,876,200.

Total acquisition, relocation, and demolition cost would be $3,432,800.

The site has no identified environmental concerns, is not located in the floodplain, and does not contain slopes of over 20%. It does, however, contain uneven terrain which would need to be considered when designing the facility, or dealt with in preparing the site for construction.

Strengths:

- Both sites are quite large allowing ample room for existing and future needs.
- Either site could be well-suited for the transit center and other mixed uses.
- Development of either site could strengthen redevelopment efforts in the Banbury Place area.
- Both sites are adjacent to rail with linkage potential for future passenger rail station options.
- The site was the location of a former rail depot which could be replicated or referred to as part of the building design.
- Neither site has any identified environmental concerns.
- Both sites fit within the parameters of existing City plans and zoning.

Weaknesses:

- Both sites have high acquisition, relocation, and demolition costs.
- The need to purchase parcels from a large number of owners adds to the project timeline and complexity.
- Site 7 is the furthest from the central downtown activity center of the four selected potential transit center sites. This distance would necessitate significant adjustment to the existing route structure.
- The site is also approximately three to four blocks from central downtown making walking or biking to businesses located there more difficult and time consuming than if the site were more centrally located.
- The site is located uphill from the central downtown area, making foot and bicycle travel between that area and the transit center more challenging.
- The topography at the site is the least construction ready.
- The site has somewhat limited options for ingress and egress, although with proper design, those limitations could be overcome.

SITE 9

Site 9 is an area known as the Wood Motor Lot due to its previous use as a car dealership site. It is located in central downtown Eau Claire, diagonal from the existing transfer center site. It is bordered by Farwell Street, Gray Street, Dewey Street, and Lake Street.

The site is the smallest of the top four sites, with 57,062 square feet; 9,062 more than the minimum required 48,000 square feet. The City of Eau Claire owns the entire site so there would be no acquisition or relocation costs associated with the property.

The cost of demolition of the existing parking lot located on the area would be $157,000. While this is the lowest cost, in terms of acquisition, there are costs that come into play to make Farwell Street safe for pedestrians to cross and to travel along by bicycle. Traffic calming measures such as narrowing the crossing length, a median refuge, and bicycle lanes are suggested to meet this objective.

Figure 25: *Site 9.*

The historic Schlegelmilch House is located on the southwest corner of the block, but was not considered part of the transit center site.The site has no identified environmental concerns, is not located in the floodplain, and does not contain slopes of over 20%.

Strengths:

- The site has adequate room for existing transit center needs with room for minimal growth.
- The site is well suited for the transit center and other mixed uses.
- Because the City of Eau Claire owns the entire site, it is the least costly of all four options.
- Since there are no buildings located on the site, demolition costs would be minimal ($157,000).
- The site is very near the existing transit center in central downtown meaning that virtually no changes would need to be made to the route structure.
- The site provides good ingress and egress points.
- Transit center development could spur growth in an area that is currently underdeveloped.
- The topography of the site is well suited for construction.
- The nearby Schlegelmilch House and its historic look could help to inspire the design of the facility.

Weaknesses:

- The site is not as integrated into the "fabric" of the downtown as sites 3 and 4.
- The area does not have as much pedestrian traffic as Sites 3 and 4 which could be necessary for a successful mixed use facility.
- The area is not as fully developed and does not have the higher density feel that many residents and businesses are looking for when choosing living, working, dining, and shopping options.
- Access to the downtown by foot or bike is not as easy as Sites 3 and 4 with a need to cross a busy city street (Farwell Street). A road diet and other bicycle or pedestrian accommodations could be implemented to counter this concern.
- Additional project costs will come in the form of improvements needed along Farwell Street.
- The site is not located near rail but a connection could be made with a downtown circular service.

3 Recommendations

GENERAL

As the City Council reviews this information and considers which of the four top sites should be selected for the transit center, it is recommended that in addition to site specific information, the following items be kept in mind:

- The transit center is, most importantly, about people. The selected site, as well as the building design and uses, must first and foremost take that into consideration. Transit riders are pedestrians. Careful consideration must be given so that the site and facility best serve these users and allow them to feel safe and valued as community members while making services, work, and shopping options accessible.
- The proposed structure needs to be a transit center. This function needs to stay at the forefront of the design decisions and not get lost in the bigger development picture. The transit facility needs to be safe, convenient, and accommodating to existing and prospective buses and passengers and aptly serve the operations of the transit system.
- The transit center needs to be considered a community asset; fitting within and enhancing the vitality of the downtown activity center. The mixed use design should contribute to and draw from the downtown, while helping to create appropriate housing, work, and shopping options for all residents.
- The selected site should allow for future growth. The City's ability to serve the transportation needs of future users is important. Trends have shown that millennials are interested in living in communities where mode choices are readily available. This trend would indicate growing bus usage in the future. An attractive transit center could also increase ridership. The required 48,000 square feet for the transit center does allow for some growth, but future needs should be considered as well.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

At this point it is difficult to determine exact funding sources that would be available for the project because the final mix of uses and tenants has not yet been determined. Some of the proposed uses (such as low income housing for example) could assist with financing the project. Those options can be investigated as the project moves forward. A partial list of potential funding sources is as follows:

Section 5339 – Section 5339 funding is available through the U.S Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration. The funding can be used for capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses, vans, and related equipment, and to construct bus-related facilities. This funding is extremely competitive but has historically been the most widely used source for transit center projects.

TIGER Grants – The U.S. Department of Transportation, Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program is a potential funding source for the project. The grants can fund capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure and are awarded on a competitive basis to projects that have a significant impact on the nation, region, or metropolitan area.

3 Recommendations

TIF Proceeds – Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a way for units of government to finance infrastructure improvements related to business development and jobs in areas where that development would not occur on its own. If appropriate, TIF could act as a partial financing mechanism for the infrastructure and improvements related to the project.

Community Development Block Grants - The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The program works to ensure decent affordable housing, to provide services to the most vulnerable, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits – Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) are tax credits made available to developers of affordable housing. The program provides incentives for the utilization of private equity. The program is administered through the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) and was one of the sources utilized in the La Crosse transit center project.

Private Partnerships – Private developers can play a financing role in mixed use projects. This assistance can take the form of full or partial ownership, leasing of space, and other forms of creative financial packaging.

Specialized funding sources available to tenants – Private, non-profit, or government tenants could also have specialized funding pools that could be accessed for assistance with the project.

NEXT STEPS AND OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- The primary purpose of this study was to examine potential sites for the construction of a transit center in downtown Eau Claire. This basic information should serve as a first step in allowing the City Council to move forward with the project.
- Although the study does examine facility uses as a means of estimating space needs, it does not go so far as making final use and design recommendations. Without knowing final uses and design it is not possible to estimate facility construction costs.
- Before moving forward and taking the final steps to secure a site, it is recommended by city staff that a Phase I environmental assessment be conducted on the site. The cost of such an assessment would be approximately $2,500.
- The City Council is urged to think creatively about site options. Things such as land swaps, selling city owned parcels to purchase alternatives sites, and other means of “thinking outside of the box” should be considered when necessary.
- The City Council may want to consider selecting multiple sites and then putting out an RFP (Request for Proposals) to developers. The RFP could request design ideas and cost estimates that would then assist the council in making a final decision on the most appropriate site.

APPENDIX A.
SURVEYS

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SURVEYS

On-line Survey

1. What is your age: *(Check only one)*
   ___1-17 ___18-24 ___25-39 ___40-59 ___60-74 ___75 or older

2. Have you ridden an ECT bus in the last 5 years?
   ___Yes ___No *(skip to #3)*

2.a. If yes, which of the following best describes your most recent bus trip? *(Check one)*

___I rode the bus to downtown Eau Claire and then walked to my destination.
___I rode the bus to downtown Eau Claire and transferred to another bus to get to my destination.
___I started my trip downtown and went elsewhere in the community.
___I did not go downtown at all during my bus trip.

3. The existing bus transfer center on Farwell St., in downtown Eau Claire, was built as a temporary facility over 30 years ago. The City is beginning to plan for a new transit center in the downtown. It is expected to be a permanent facility with indoor seating, heated and air conditioned, with ticket/pass sales, public restrooms, and bus drivers' facilities.

   What other amenities do you think should be included with the transit center?: *(Check 5 that you feel are most important.)*

___WIFI (wireless internet service)
___Changing area/Pay showers
___Outdoor seating with trees and benches
___ Bicycle lockers/ parking
___ATM
___Transportation museum
___Cell phone charging station
___Bike share/Bike rental station
___Car rental/Car share station
___Cab stand/Pedi-Cab
___News stand
___Visitors' Center/Kiosk
___Electronic bus locator signs
___Vending machines

___Other _____

4. If the transit center was built as part of a mixed use building, what other uses do you think should be included in the building? *(Check 5 that you feel are most important.)*

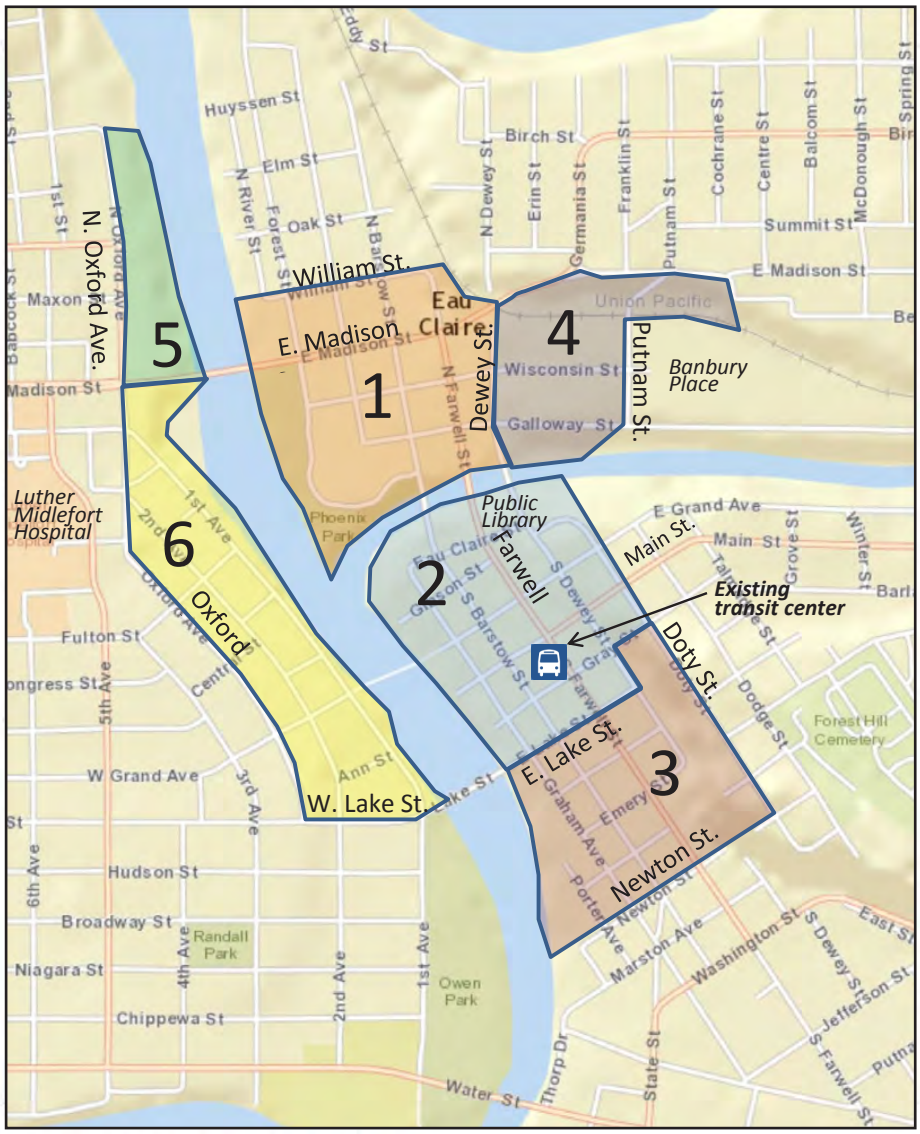
___ Housing (Apartments/Condos)
___ Office Space (privately leased)
___ Retail (Stores)
What kind of retail:
___ Grocery/food
___ Pharmacy
___General retail space
___Other retail, describe _____
___Multi-modal transportation hub (cabs, intercity buses, passenger rail, airport shuttle, etc.)
___Parking ramp/spaces
___Services
What kind of services:
___Government Services (social services, job training center, etc.)
___Community meeting space
___Senior/Community center
___Indoor public market
___Fitness/Recreation center
___Day care
___Coffee shop
___Restaurant/Diner
___Dry Cleaner
___Free clinic (medical/dental)
___Other services, describe_____

___Other uses, describe _____

5. Looking at the map below, which area do you feel would be the best location for a transit center?
(Check the appropriate number of the one area you prefer)

___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ___6

___Other location, describe_____



Other Comments regarding a new transit center:

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX A.
SURVEYS

ECT Rider Survey

Please only fill out this survey once. Thank you!

1. What is your age? *(check one)*:
   ___1-17 ___18-24 ___25-39 ___40-59 ___60-74 ___75 or older

2. Which statement best describes the bus trip you are currently making? *(check one)*:

   ___I'm riding the bus to the downtown transit center and will then walk to my destination from there.

   ___I'm riding the bus to the downtown transit center and will transfer to another bus to get to my destination.

   ___I will not go to the downtown transit center on this bus trip.

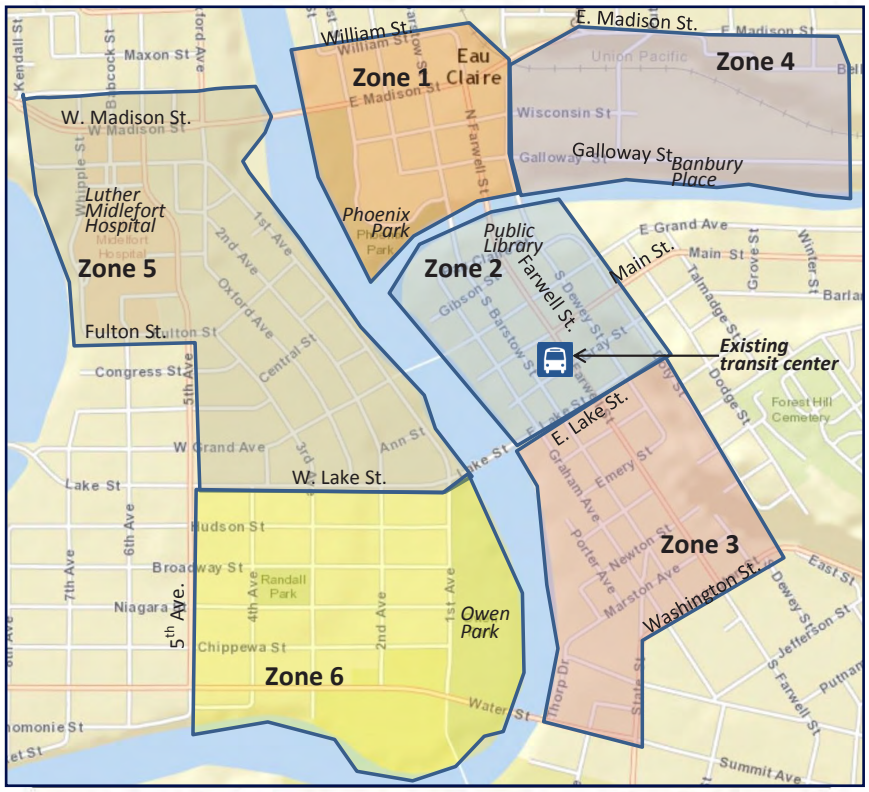
3. Please look at the map below and check the area that includes the destination of your trip.

   ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ___6

   ___Other location, describe *(address or place name)*:_____

4. What is the purpose of this trip? I am going to:

   ___ work ___dentist/doctor
   ___ school ___nutrition (to restaurant or meal site)
   ___shopping ___other personal business



If you would like to provide more input concerning a new transit center, please take our online survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TransitCenter

APPENDIX B.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC INPUT MEETING - FEBRUARY 11, 2016

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Eau Claire Transit Center Site Selection Study
Public Meeting Comments – February 11, 2016; 4:30-6:30 PM; Eau Claire Public Library

1. I am a member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Our church is on the corner of Farwell and Gray streets, north of the potential Wood Motor site. On Sundays, our congregation uses about 20-25 parking spots in the City's Wood Motor lot. If that site is the choice, we hope that there will continue to be parking on that site.
   Personally, I prefer the old farmers' market site (Site #4). It is closer to new housing, and it is closer to other city destinations – Phoenix Park, the Confluence, the new parking garage. I would like to see riding the bus be a "choice" as well as a necessity. Site #4 (the old farmers' market) is the best site.

2. I prefer Site 4. If Site 9 is chosen, it would be helpful to have parking spaces available for our church, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, during services on the weekend. Our church is across from the Wood Motor lot. We have an average of 120 people attending service on Sunday and have activities at church all week. We use the Wood Motor lot for parking on the weekend. I see that Site 9 is the cheapest, but the smallest and I think Site 4 is the best location. Closest to the Arts Building of the Confluence Project. Closest to a parking ramp and on the bike trail Site 4 appears that it might be in flood plain, so parking lot for the buses would be a good use for property that might be flooded.

3. I like #4 because as a choice rider it has easy access to bike trail and pedestrian access to downtown. Eventually I would like to see a train station, separate, because it is uphill from Downtown.
   #9 is appealing for cost, but it seems too "far" from where people want to go, unless there is a good downtown circuit bus plus pedestrian work on Farwell.

4. I really hope we can build a badly needed new center because it's <u>needed</u> for current riders and also because I believe a new center would increase ridership
   My leaning preferences are to keep the center near the heart of downtown. Site 4 is at the top of my list.

5. I suspect that many of the people who currently use the buses daily have no-or-few other transportation options. Their needs should be central to any planning
   On the other hand, I'd love to see the bus transportation system expanded for more choice riders. It would be nice to incorporate rail transportation and/or long distance intercity bus transportation into the transit center.
   If site 9 is chosen, accommodations should be made for parking for the surrounding churches on Sundays. We have counted 20-25 Unitarian cars parked in the Wood Motor lot on Sundays. That doesn't include the Christ Church Cathedral cars.

6.
- Consider need to have ½-hour routes and 1-hour routes to the south side and making sure the location can achieve that.
- Include some space in the transit center, accessible for riders, for nonprofit organizations to table and do outreach with riders. Could include WCWRPC, CVTA, Health Dept., etc.
- Should be in the heart of downtown. Higher use than parking ramps, and those are in the center.
- Needs to be designed to reduce the amount of walking between buses and have indoor waiting areas in locations so that people do not have to be outside for long.
- Include location for future bike share program.
- Support space for 15 buses.
- Space for intercity buses like Greyhound, Badger Bus, Jefferson Lines.
- Need sheltered bike parking and lockers
- Include Just Local Food Grocery Store
- Need a green roof and solar PV and solar hot water
- Don't like site 3
- Like the radial pulse system design
- Like how site 4 is on the bike trail and in the center of downtown – but save the historic buildings.
- I think the current site (including the adjacent lot should have been considered as a location for an expanded transfer center.

7. To help Council consider costs, please:
   - Include estimate of necessary changes to Farwell if #9 is chosen
   - Include fair market value of city-owned land in case financing might include sale or trade of land
   - North of river sites – #3 or #4 – seem the best in terms of serving system into the future, attracting choice riders, and accommodating additional uses
   - Would it be possible to use/acquire less than the full block for site 3? Would that make sense if it reduced acquisition/relocation costs?

8. I appreciate the thoughtful work that has been put into this study by many people. Having learned more about the various factors under consideration, I would venture to say that location needs to be more explicitly analyzed. The location of a transit center may not significantly affect those who rely on the transit system as their primary means of transportation. If a goal is to attract choice riders – and I think that should be a very clear goal – location of the transit center matters more. The easier it is for riders to access popular downtown destinations, the more likely it will be that some people will leave their cars at home and ride the bus. That is why I think site 4 is the preferred option – it is close to Phoenix Park, the Confluence, the Library, the bike trail, shopping, restaurants, housing, and more. Site 9 is not only farther from these destinations, it is more dangerous to access them – being on the far side of Farwell St. A future-minded transit system should have a transit center that attracts new riders and increases its role in the sustainable transportation of the city.