North River Now

North River Conceptual Development Plan
Final Report

Prepared for:
The City of Fort Wayne, Indiana

Prepared by:
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Acknowledgements

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Special thanks to the numerous staff members of the City of Fort Wayne’s Community Development Division, who worked behind the scenes to make this project possible. An additional note of thanks to Dan and Judi Wire for the River Tours, The Imagine School System, Northside High School and Arts United for the use of their facilities.
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1. Introduction

The Conceptual Development Plan is the final product of the Fort Wayne North River Now Task Force. It includes the planning, design, and transportation recommendations resulting from a four-month effort that involved the public, community leaders, and the consultant team.

The purpose of conducting the charrette was: to determine the most appropriate use for the North River District; to capture the community’s vision for the North River district; to identify implementation steps that can leverage public funds and private investments; and to ensure that downtown Fort Wayne retains its role both as the vibrant social and physical center of the region, and as a sought-after destination.

A 34-member Task Force representing a broad range of interests in Fort Wayne provided guidance and feedback throughout the charrette process. A full list of the Task Force members can be found on the Acknowledgements page.

The consultant team retained for the charrette effort included: ACP – Visioning & Planning as the planning and urban design lead firm; Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin, as the transportation specialists; Convention, Sports & Leisure (CSL), as the sport facility market specialists; and Gary Bumpus as the architectural illustrator.
Following this brief introduction, the report is organized according to the following chapters:

2. Methodology – provides an overview of the entire process.

3. Background – highlights the findings of relevant downtown studies (including BlueprintPlus and the Downtown Housing Study) as well as ideas and comments from the community meetings.

4. Planning and Design Principles – includes a discussion of thirteen development principles that frame the North River area’s plan.

5. Conceptual Development Plan – provides a detailed description of the uses and facilities identified through the charrette process.

6. Transportation Plan – describes recommended changes to the current road network within and outside the site.

7. Implementation – presents strategies for jump-starting implementation of the North River plan.

With this report, the results of the North River Now Design Charrette are now in the hands of the community. From this perspective, the charrette is not the end of a process, but the beginning of the complex task to implement the Plan by bringing public, private, and civic sectors together to work towards achieving the community’s vision.
2. Methodology

A charrette is a technique that has been widely applied throughout the world to bring together—in a compressed period of time—the multi-disciplinary talents and energies of consultants, Task Force, staff, and all interested parties. For Fort Wayne, ACP – Visioning & Planning designed a format to provide the widest range of opportunities for public input over a short period of time. This chapter describes the process steps implemented prior to and during the North River Now charrette.

This chapter is divided in two parts:

A. Preparatory Steps – describes activities conducted in preparation for the charrette.

B. The Charrette Process – describes the specific events of the charrette.

A. Preparatory Steps

Preparatory steps took place over a period of three months – May, June, and July 2007. They included public meetings, interactive sessions with the Task Force, and the pre-charrette meeting between the consultant team and project staff. Each of these steps is described below.
Public Meeting Schedule:
Bloomingdale / Spy Run Neighborhood Input Meeting:
  - Wednesday, May 16, 6 – 8 p.m., City-County Building

Community Input Meetings:
  - Tuesday, June 12, 11:30 – 1:30 p.m., Allen County Public Library Main Branch
  - Thursday, June 14, 6 – 8 p.m., Taylor University
  - Tuesday, June 19, 6 – 8 p.m., IPFW Walb Student Union Ballroom

Public Meetings
In the spring of 2007, Fort Wayne staff conducted four brainstorming sessions in locations throughout the community. The Community Development staff of the City provided training, facilitation, and logistical support for each meeting. Meetings were structured in three parts: general assembly, small group input sessions, and reporting.

During the small group input sessions participants responded to a series of questions related to: the type of uses envisioned for the site; the characteristics of what was envisioned; the relationship between the potential development on the site and surrounding neighborhoods and facilities; and negative impacts or concerns resulting from development of the North River site. With over 100 individuals participating in the various sessions, a total of 670 responses were generated. A brief summary of the results of the public meetings can be found in Chapter 3: Background.

The Task Force used the ideas suggested by the public to develop a set of 13 development principles that are described in Chapter 4: Planning and Design Principles.

Interaction with the Task Force
The 34-member Task Force appointed by the Mayor and County Commissioners met monthly over a 4-month period and played a proactive role in preparation for the charrette and in the development of the plan. The Task Force reviewed previous plans and proposals for the site, conducted a brainstorming session structured along the lines of the public meetings, visited the site via a walking tour as well as a boat tour along the river, and developed and prioritized draft design and development principles for the site.

The Task Force also participated in an exercise called “Places that Inspire,” designed to give the consultant team indications on the preferred visual character for development at the North River site. ACP presented a series of images drawn from different communities. Task Force members were asked to indicate which images were most appropriate for the site, which were not, and why. Task Force comments on these images gave the charrette team insights into the type of physical development best suited for the site. Two examples of the images evaluated during the “Places that Inspire” exercise can be seen below.
B. The Charrette Process

The charrette, which was held from July 23rd through July 26th, offered numerous opportunities for community members to share ideas and respond to the initial work of the consultant Team, Task Force, and project staff.

Three major public events framed the charrette: a public design workshop held on the evening of July 23rd, an Open House hosted at the charrette studio on the evening of July 25th, and a presentation of the Draft Plan on July 26th.

Public Design Workshop

The Charrette kicked off with a major public design workshop held the evening of July 23rd. With over 50 attendees, the 2.5-hour meeting attracted a wide cross-section of the public and generated five alternative schematic plans for the site.

Participants listened to a presentation to gain an understanding about the project background, and had the opportunity to rank the thirteen draft development principles identified by the Task Force based on input from the public meetings. The principles and their ranking are presented in Chapter 4: Planning and Design Principles.

The central activity of the workshop was a facilitated group exercise. Tables of approximately 10 participants were divided into small groups; each small group focused on one of three topics: land use, transportation and connectivity, and parks, trails, and open space. With guidance from trained table facilitators and through brainstorming various prompt questions, each table mapped out their vision for the North River site and generated recommendations for inclusion in the North River plan.

This activity demonstrated a high level of agreement across the groups and produced valuable information that enabled the consultant team to proceed with the development of the Plan.

The Task Force, staff and consultant team reviewed the five schematic plans produced in the workshop and agreed to further explore a preliminary...
preferred plan. Over the next day and a half (July 24th and 25th), the consultant team further developed the preferred plan for presentation in the second public event of the charrette, the Open House.

**The Open House**

On the evening of July 25th, the Team hosted an open house at the charrette studio. Approximately 80 people attended the three-hour event. Community members had the opportunity to review the preliminary plan to ask questions, to discuss individual aspects of the plan with the consultants, and to provide comments on the Plan. A major element of discussion at the Open House was the way the consultant team had addressed the public’s desire to incorporate water and access to the river as a central element of the Plan. This discussion led to a thorough redesign of an esplanade anchoring the southern edge of the North River site.

**Draft Plan Presentation / “North River Showcase”**

On the evening of July 26th, the consultant Team presented the Draft Plan back to the community. Over 80 residents including members of the press attended the event. The question and answer period following the presentation revealed strong support for the vision for the North River site.
3. Background

The conceptual framework of the North River plan is the result of several studies and initiatives that have provided background, guidelines, and, importantly, inspiration in the development of the plan. This chapter highlights the major elements that informed the development of the North River plan. These include: Blueprint Plus, a review of previous plans for the area; the Downtown Housing Report; Plan it Allen!, the City/County Comprehensive Plan; the Sport Facility Feasibility Study; and input from the public meetings.

Only those aspects that directly affected the development of the North River plan are summarized below. Additional information on these studies and initiatives can be obtained from the City.

Blueprint Plus

*Blueprint Plus is the plan that directly contributed to the North River plan the most.* Completed in the fall of 2005, Blueprint Plus put the spotlight on downtown Fort Wayne. Following and building upon the successful “Blueprint” plan completed two years earlier, Blueprint Plus identified a total of 49 new initiatives and marked a renewed emphasis to invest in downtown projects on the part of the City. *Among the 49 initiatives there was the recommendation for the City to consider buying*
the 29-acre Omni Source property. Significantly, however, Blueprint Plus expanded the geographic boundaries of downtown to include areas South and North of the traditional core and recommended strengthening residential neighborhoods east and west of the core.

In its findings, Blueprint Plus recognized the strength of the core of downtown Fort Wayne, reinforced by investments and initiatives that had resulted from the former Blueprint plan. It also recognized the weakness represented by areas of disinvestment to the north, east and west of the downtown core. Historically, the core diminished in size from the days when downtown was the commercial center of the city and the region, leaving behind large areas where buildings had been torn down and replaced by surface parking areas, if at all, and where once prosperous businesses moved to other locations. These areas east, west, and north of downtown represented dismal gateways to a downtown that had gradually lost its shops and restaurants and transformed itself into a business district. To the south,
investments occurred over the years in the form of suburban types of developments with new buildings set back from the street and surrounded by surface parking. This suburban condition also presented a gateway to downtown that expressed a very different physical reality than that of the core, which is rich with great historic landmarks and signature modern buildings all contained within a walkable ¼ of a mile radius. Blueprint Plus recognized that the revitalization of the downtown core could hardly be sustained if it remained an island of redevelopment and investments surrounded by areas of disinvestment, neglect and low density suburban-like types of development.

Blueprint Plus recommended:

- “Redeveloping the large under-used tracts of land north and southwest of the downtown core into walkable, urban, and mixed regional centers of activities, which include sports facilities that complement and enrich the core.”
- “Making the river central to downtown, integrating it as an accessible and vital component of the city’s trails and open space system.”
- “Encouraging and facilitating the infill and redevelopment over time of deteriorated neighborhoods…”
- “Facilitating the development of targeted housing opportunities in downtown.”

These principles provided impetus and direction for the development of the mixed-use Harrison Square, the development south of the Grand Wayne convention center, and now serve as a guide for the North River Now initiative.

**Previous Proposals for the North River Site**

The area north of the St. Mary’s River has been the focus of redevelopment interest for a long time.
The area was considered as part of the plan for Headwaters Park, as a major extension of the park north of the river. In this proposal, the North River area was to become a major park facility inclusive of the existing Lawton Park and rich in amenities such as a grand “lawn” called the “Egg,” a minor league baseball park, a boat house with moorings, and an arboretum. The park would have surrounded Clinton Street creating a beautiful entry into downtown from the north. This proposal strongly established the centrality of the St. Mary River to downtown and recommended sport and recreation as the primary uses of the North River area.

More recently, the North River site has been the focus of the KROC Salvation Army Center initiative. The KROC proposal was an ambitious and complex private-public partnership to leverage $95 million to create a recreational and sport facility complex including, among others: a year-round Olympic water facility, game rooms, a conference and retreat center, a year-round 200 meter track and field facility, soccer fields, and a privately developed hotel complex.

This sweeping proposal once again established the North River as the place for recreational and sport uses. The plan, while it failed to raise the necessary funds in the Salvation Army KROC initiative, brought renewed interest to the North River and its potential as a regional destination.

The Downtown Housing Study

Even though no specific housing study was conducted for the North River site, a study conducted as a follow-up to Blueprint Plus provided a good primer regarding the potential for downtown housing.

_The findings of this report are critical to the development of the North River plan and are summarized below._

The study, conducted by Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc., encompassed the core of Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, including West Central, Bloomingdale, Spy Run, the southern part of Northside, and East Central. The study was designed to identify the depth and breadth of the market for newly-introduced housing units, both market-rate and affordable—created both through the adaptive re-use of existing non-residential buildings as well as through new construction—to be leased or sold within the Downtown Fort Wayne Study Area. It was completed in 2006.

_The Downtown Housing Study corroborates the general philosophy and approach presented in the Blueprint Plus and in the North River plans._

Quoting the study, “A core premise underlying an overall housing strategy for the City of Fort Wayne should be that, to retain existing households, or to attract new ones, appropriate new housing units should be provided in the Downtown Study Area. The creation or strengthening of Downtown residential neighborhoods need not be a “zero-sum” exercise; rather than succeeding at the expense of other city neighborhoods, new
housing opportunities within the Downtown, when properly targeted, are likely to increase the number of households that move into the city as well as provide alternatives to households that might otherwise move out of the city.”

The study found considerable pent-up demand exists for Downtown housing, both new construction and adaptive re-use of existing buildings.

More specifically the study revealed that the market potential for new and existing market-rate and affordable housing units to be leased or sold within the Downtown Fort Wayne Study Area each year consists of up to 3,750 households with a preference for urban neighborhoods. That number represents 22 percent of the 17,100 households that represents the potential market for the whole city of Fort Wayne. Based on a 15 percent capture of the potential market for multi-family units, and a 10 percent capture of single-family units, the Downtown Fort Wayne Study Area should be able to support up to 387 new market-rate units per year as well as 127 affordable ones. The two charts below show, respectively, the annual market potential of market rate and of affordable units. They also provide an overview of the type of housing products sought by those households with a preference for urban neighborhoods.

The household groups that comprise the potential market are:

- Younger singles and childless couples—including, among others, professionals, office and retail workers, and “knowledge” workers (59 percent);
- Empty nesters and retirees, many of whom are living in Fort Wayne’s outer neighborhoods (23 percent); and
- A range of non-traditional families (18 percent).

**CHART 1: ANNUAL CAPTURE OF MARKET POTENTIAL - MARKET RATE UNITS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSING TYPE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS</th>
<th>CAPTURE RATE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF NEW UNITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rental Multi-Family</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(lofts/apartments, leaseholder)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-Sale Multi-Family</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(lofts/apartments, condo/co-op ownership)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-Sale Single-Family Attached</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(townhouses/rowhouses, fee-simple ownership)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-Sale Single-Family Detached</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(houses, fee-simple ownership)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,870</td>
<td></td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Market rate is defined as affordable to households with incomes no less than 80 percent of the Area Median Family Income (AMFI), in 2005, of $59,400 for a family of four.

Source: Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.
CHART 2: ANNUAL CAPTURE OF MARKET POTENTIAL - AFFORDABLE UNITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Type</th>
<th>Number of Households</th>
<th>Capture Rate</th>
<th>Number of New Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rental Multi-Family (below market) (Lofts/apartments, leaseholder)</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-sale Single-Family Detached (rowhouses, fee-simple ownership)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>880</strong></td>
<td><strong>127</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.*

The study concludes that “…to support and sustain residential diversity in the Downtown Fort Wayne Study Area, an effective housing strategy to attract the target households should include:

- The creation of a variety of housing types, both rental and for-sale, including higher-value market-rate as well as affordable housing units, throughout the Study Area;
- The establishment of general neighborhood guidelines to assure the compatibility of every scale and type of housing;
- Mixed-use development: the inclusion of a residential component within mixed-use buildings, either adaptive re-use or new construction.”

**Plan-It Allen!**

Plan-it Allen! was the culmination of a three-year planning process that included the participation, collaboration and consensus of Allen County, the City of Fort Wayne, local city and town government officials, boards and commissions, and citizens throughout the community. As a Comprehensive Plan, Plan-it Allen serves as the official policy document to guide growth and development in Allen County (its cities, towns and communities) and the City of Fort Wayne.

Several of the principles and objectives presented by Plan-It Allen! are consistent with and support the proposed plan for North River. Included below are a few examples of the Plan-it Allen principles that have helped frame the North River plan:

- The visual character, historic features and natural assets inherent within the community should be retained and enhanced.
- Neighborhoods, downtowns, commercial centers and towns should be compact, pedestrian-friendly and mixed-use; districts of single use should be the exception.
- Housing with a diversity of values and types should be encouraged to provide housing choices within neighborhoods and throughout the community.
Civic, institutional and commercial activity should not be isolated in single-use districts, but be integrated into the neighborhood fabric. The use of open spaces, such as parks, plazas and squares, should be encouraged to promote gathering places within neighborhoods, downtowns, commercial centers and towns. A connective framework of transit, pedestrian and bicycle systems should be provided that allows alternative modes of travel in addition to motorized vehicles. Each community or cluster of neighborhoods should have a well-defined edge and be interconnected wherever possible.

Regional Facility Use Analysis

The City retained the services of Conventions, Sports & Leisure International (“CSL”) to analyze several recreational facilities that have the potential to create a regional draw on the North River site. CSL worked concurrently with the Task Force and ACP. They conducted a number of interviews with sport and tourism stakeholders and, based on those interviews and input from the public meetings, developed a matrix to compare possible facilities for the North River site. Facilities included competitive swimming and diving pools, small and large water parks, ice sheets, a gymnasium, an indoor track and field facility, and outdoor sports fields. CSL analyzed those facilities through indicators that included: square footage, responsiveness to community needs, tourist draw, economic impact, and ability to generate private investments and revenue/profit.

The analysis revealed that:

- An indoor waterpark facility is a type of facility in demand and represents an opportunity for creating a regional destination, while meeting the interest and expectation expressed by the public. This type of facility is typically developed in conjunction with a hotel and developed privately, even though there are two similar facilities within a 200-mile radius from Fort Wayne that are publicly owned and operated. Facilities privately operated typically limit admission to hotel guests, with access for non-guests limited to availability.

- A state-of-the-art natatorium with a competitive 50-meter pool with a separate diving well would meet a community need, would cater to local users on a day-to-day basis, and could attract regional, state and national meets to Fort Wayne even though competition from Indianapolis and Bloomington for State High School and Indiana Swimming would be strong due to location. While the facility would likely require a significant operating subsidy, it may have the potential to generate significant economic impacts by attracting non-local participants and spectators to the venue.

- There appears to be significant demand for additional ice sheets in Fort Wayne, particularly during the peak hockey season. The appropriateness of developing a facility with multiple sheets of ice
on the North River site depends in part on the future of the McMillan Arena, and the possibility that private investors will build a new facility.

- There is limited demand for an outdoor sports complex, and space requirements for such a facility would largely create a poor fit with the type of development envisioned by the public.

_The North River plan took the results of this analysis into account and, while providing for a hotel and a 90,000 square-foot indoor waterpark, it is also recommending that a specific feasibility study be conducted to determine the best type of regional facility suitable for the site and for serving residents and visitors alike._

### Input from the Public

The North River Conceptual Development Plan has been shaped by the people of Allen County, the North River Task Force and staff. Input meetings were conducted in June of 2007. Fort Wayne staff conducted five input sessions, which were held at various locations throughout the community - the Allen County Public Library, IPFW, Taylor University, the City-County Building and the Chapel at Imagine School.

Over 100 individuals attended the input sessions and the participants generated a total of 670 responses. Overall the participants were enthusiastic about the proposed project area and were highly engaged in the session. A majority of participants said they wanted something extraordinary at the site with a special emphasis on a water element and connection to the river. A “do-nothing” approach was not an option for development of the site.

The ideas from the community meetings were recorded, organized into a spreadsheet and sorted into categories. Although many original and unique ideas were generated from the sessions, a number of common themes emerged. Some of the common ideas people expressed were:

- Water as a major theme and design feature;
- Development of a major facility to anchor the site;
- Mixed-use urban development; and
- Residential uses focusing on multi family.

Water emerged as a major element of the public vision. The public expressed the imperative of connecting the site with the St. Mary’s River, the need to celebrate and restore the historic presence of water on the site (the feeder canal), and the desire to see water features throughout the design of the site.

The top responses made by participants regarding a major facility anchoring the site were: an indoor water park and an aquarium. Other ideas included a sports center, an amusement park and an education facility that would tie in with Science Central.

Many participants envisioned the North River area to be a place that would include small retail shops, family sports, and a variety of residential
3. Background

and commercial uses in a walkable urban and well-designed community. There were comparisons of this area being developed similar to areas such as Broad Ripple in Indianapolis.

The public was very emphatic regarding their feelings regarding the traits and characteristics of the North River Development. They emphasized the importance of density and design, connection to the river, connection to the downtown, and recognition of Fort Wayne history at the site.

Linkages between the North River site and the surrounding neighborhood areas, including the downtown core were viewed as very important aspects of project development. None of the participant responses viewed the project area as a self-contained “island.” Rather there was strong support for pedestrian linkages to the river and linkages to the east and west of the site across Clinton Street. The participants also recommended physical and thematic links to existing facilities in the area such as Science Central, Lawton Park and Wells Street. Finally, the public expressed the desire to see the future development of the site as a catalyst for extended and expanded pedestrian connectivity both within the site and in the rest of the city connecting to the existing and proposed regional greenway system.

Participants expressed concerns regarding the development’s impact on traffic and congestion. Their concerns mainly revolved around slowing traffic down along Clinton Street and reconfiguring the street pattern in the site. Other concerns regarded environmental issues and the sustainability of the project.

Community-wide Survey

A community wide survey regarding the North River project was distributed to all City Utility customers in their July billing as well as posted on the City’s website. The community enthusiastically responded to the survey with over 2,250 returned surveys.

The tabulated results of the community-wide survey mirrored many of the responses that were given at the public input sessions. In fact, the survey’s top responses for type of development at the North River site, a water park and an aquarium, were the identical top responses given at the public input sessions. Likewise, in both the survey and public input sessions there was a strong desire for mixed-use development, with cafes, small shops, restaurants and residential development. Finally, the survey’s top responses also showed that the community wanted the North River area to become a destination where there was always something to do 24-hours a day. (And everybody knows your name.)

The survey ended with an open question “Describe in three words how you would describe the North River area 10 years from now.” There were many responses given with most responses describing the future of the area as vibrant, fun, entertaining, and always something to do.
4. Planning and Design Principles

Principles are statements of purpose that help determine the quality, pattern and character of future development. The following thirteen planning and design principles used in this report reflect ideas and comments provided by the public at the four public meetings. They were further refined and then prioritized by the North River Task Force. They were reviewed and prioritized by the public at the July 23 public workshop.

The principles, as presented to the public at the July 23 meeting, are listed below:

1. Celebrate the river as a focal point of the downtown area, integrate it with the existing neighborhoods, and examine opportunities to improve public access and recreational opportunities on the river.
2. Ensure that investments of public money at the site will be fiscally responsible and create ongoing, sustainable economic returns for the community.
3. Encourage walking and biking throughout the site by creating attractive, safe, and contiguous pedestrian and bicycle connections that link to surrounding areas.
4. Develop standards to promote high quality design that creates a unique sense of place and an attractive public realm, and which ties
4. Planning and Design Principles

in with the historic character of the area. Capitalize on historic assets such as the freight house and the old canal.

5. Ensure that the site relates to and complements existing assets such as Science Central, Imagine School, Lawton Park, Headwaters Park, and the downtown skyline from the river.

6. Create a walkable downtown neighborhood north of the river with an identifiable landmark, focal point, and/or large public gathering space (i.e. fountain, canal, or marketplace).

7. Provide for a mix of uses – such as residential, commercial, entertainment, and open space – that reflects the urban nature of the site, attracts a diverse population, and promotes vibrant activities in the downtown area. Provide for diverse housing types.

8. Design the site in a manner that respects nearby residential neighborhoods and generates positive impacts for those who live nearby.

9. Recognize that the site represents an opportunity to expand downtown in a way that reflects the principles established in the Blueprint for the Future and BlueprintPlus plans.

10. Promote commercial activity on the site that complements rather than competes with nearby businesses and keeps within the scale of the community.

11. Ensure that any new development should avoid harm to the floodplain and serve as an opportunity to apply green building technology.

12. Enhance the roadway connectivity throughout the site with well-engineered routes that improve traffic flow (both north/south and east/west). Re-establish the street grid as recommended in the BlueprintPlus as a way to integrate the site with adjacent neighborhoods.

13. Leverage private investment to create a family-oriented, local and regional destination that will attract visitors year-round.

The July 23 workshop participants used these principles to frame discussion in the process of developing schematic plans for the North River. They were also used as guidelines in developing the final plan. The Task Force in their final meeting recommended that these principles be adopted by City Council to empower appropriate agencies to assist in the development process and ensure that the vision expressed by the public is implemented.
5. Conceptual Development Plan

This chapter describes the street network, land use, physical characteristics, and visual character of the North River plan.

Following the public meeting on July 23rd, Task Force, staff, and the consultant team convened to review the five schematic alternatives produced and to identify common themes and features of those alternatives. The alternatives revealed a great deal of similarities.

The dominant, common themes that emerged included:

- Create a canal or water feature on the site;
- Close portions of 4th Street between Clinton and Spy Run Avenue, expanding Lawton Park to the river;
- Include a variety of green spaces throughout the site;
- Locate the proposed regional facility to the north edge of the site;
- Intensify uses on the site;
- Expand the site’s reach to the St. Mary’s River;
- Create a hard edge along the river;
- Develop east-west connections through the site; such as Spring to Tennessee and Putnam to Elizabeth;
- Establish a new north-south connector parallel to Clinton Street; and
- Understand the city-wide implications of the proposed development.

These common themes were used to shape the North River plan.
Street Network

The street network being recommended for the North River Conceptual Development Plan is designed to improve both north/south and east/west street connectivity. This robust street network will allow traffic associated with the North River project to have minimal impacts on existing street intersections and improve the livability of the Clinton Street and Wells Street transportation corridors.

Key elements of the plan, include:

- Extending Calhoun Street north to Jacobs Avenue and eventually to State Boulevard.
- Extending Putnam Street east to Elizabeth Avenue.
- Extending 6th Street east to 4th Street. (Potential also exists to connect 6th street to Tennessee Avenue as a longer range project.)

This transportation analysis assumed that State Boulevard would be widened as part of a project which includes the widening of State Boulevard’s two lane section between Wells Street and Clinton Street from two lanes to five lanes. In addition, an additional west bound through lane is
being added to State Boulevard between Clinton Street and Spy Run Avenue. It also assumed that Clinton Street would be realigned as proposed by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Alternative One of the Clinton Street realignment proposes the following:

- Constructing a new bridge over Spy Run Creek
- Realigning Westbrook and Jacobs Avenue.
- Shifting Clinton Street east to soften the existing curve at Jacobs Avenue.
- Maintaining existing alignment south of Elizabeth Avenue.
The North River Conceptual Development Plan

The map below shows the North River Conceptual Development Plan. The North River Task Force has recommended that the City adopt the Conceptual Development Plan as an amendment to the Plan-it Allen! Comprehensive Plan.

The North River Conceptual Development Plan is described in the following pages using seven distinctive areas or conditions that include:

Condition 1: Water Theme
Area 2: River Esplanade
Area 3: Mixed-Use Core
Area 4: Civic District
Area 5: Residential Buffer
Area 6: Green Infrastructure

Each of these areas is described in detail. Specific place strategies for each area are also described. The descriptions of the areas and the descriptions of the place strategies within each area provide a detailed overview of the complex aspects of the proposed development.

**Condition 1: Water Theme**

The idea of making water the central feature of the North River plan is one that created great passion among the public and within the Task Force. The plan emphasizes the fact that the St. Mary’s River is the major water feature of the site for historic, geographic and environmental reasons. It would be hard to conceive of a grander water feature: a place to contemplate, to use actively, and to set as the canvas for activities and events, such as the often cited, “WaterFire,” the central attraction of downtown Providence, Rhode Island.

There are other ways, however, that the plan uses water as a ubiquitous presence throughout the site. They include a celebration of the feeder canal, a streaming water feature along Main Street, and fountains.

**Place Strategies**

1. **The feeder canal** – Historically, a navigable feeder canal intersected the North River site and was used to connect the St. Mary’s River to the Erie Canal. Traces of the canal can still be seen in the oblique layout of property lines west of the North River site. Two small segments showing the plan view of the canal are visible in survey maps. Clearly, the canal had an important role in the economic vitality of the North River. A full reconstruction of the canal, however, would present difficult public works and engineering conditions due to the differences in level of the site and of the St. Mary’s River. The plan proposes to use the visible traces of the canal on the site as two fragments to evoke, celebrate, and remember the canal. The two segments have been imbedded in the Civic Esplanade and in the Canal Court. They could be rendered as still reflecting pools or as fountains.

2. **The streaming water feature** – A further reminder of the fact that water used to intersect the site is reinforced in the form of a proposed narrow and shallow canal running the length of Calhoun Street from the feeder canal fountains to the river. There are several examples of streaming water features found in North European cities. The most famous are the Freiburg Baechles, found in Freiburg, a German town of 85,000 residents (shown in the next page). In the North River plan the streaming water feature is conceived as a series of linear fountains that could be designed by local artists, and with different segments of the feature assigned a
different theme. As the streaming fountains move south, they terminate into a fountain on the River Esplanade centered on the axis of Main Street.

Area 2: The River Esplanade

The River Esplanade anchors the southern edge of the North River development creating a public and civic place that enables residents to physically descend to the St. Mary’s River and provides access from the river to the North River development. These two conditions will enable the plan to accomplish its highest priority to: “Celebrate the river as a focal point of the downtown area, integrate it with the existing neighborhoods, and examine opportunities to improve public access and recreational opportunities on the river.”

The Esplanade also creates a development opportunity through the intensification of residential and commercial uses in the most desirable location, along the riverfront. Finally the St. Mary’s River becomes the strongest and most natural of the water elements featured throughout the development.
3. **Create a hard edge along the St. Mary’s River** – The notion of creating a hard edge along the St. Mary’s River west of the Clinton Street bridge and where the development comes in physical contact with it was an idea advanced strongly in the July 23rd design workshop and one reinforced by comments made at the Open House. The creation of the hard edge will require re-engineering a discrete segment of the levee system along the river. The benefits of creating the hard edge are several: it enables the creation of a public open space directly on the river; it enables spectacular views of the downtown; and, finally, it creates the opportunity to place a valuable free standing structure (possibly a café or restaurant) with seating directly on the Esplanade.

4. **Enable access to and from the St. Mary’s River** – The St. Mary’s River becomes accessible for the first time in the entire downtown area through a set of steps and/or ramps descending from the top of the Esplanade. Docking structures can be provided at the water landing to allow small boats to dock and to give access to the development from the river.

5. **Intensify uses along the Esplanade** – The Esplanade creates value by making the river access feasible in the context of the walkable urban character of the North River development. In consideration of the increased value of the area surrounding the Esplanade, the plan recommends that the buildings facing the esplanade be built at a higher density than the rest of the development. In particular, the proposed apartment building at the northwest edge could be built five to six stories high and the two buildings anchoring the north side of the Esplanade, across from 4th Street, could be built at variable heights to take advantage of the river views.

6. **Create a building/pavilion on the Esplanade** – The hardscape of the Esplanade enables the development of a unique landmark building that can be used as a café restaurant or as a pavilion to host community events, weddings, and other types of celebrations.
5. Conceptual Development Plan

Area 3: The Mixed-Use Core

The mixed-use core extends along Calhoun Street from Putnam Street to the river and is the most critical land use and visual element of the North River site. It is the development’s new main street. The spine is envisioned as an attractive and vital commercial and residential street. The building density, the design treatment of buildings and sidewalks, and the exciting mix of uses envisioned there make it a place which is attractive to the younger singles, childless couples, empty-nesters and retirees, and non traditional families identified by the Downtown Housing Study. As a truly integrated residential and commercial place, the development’s extended Calhoun Street will have the further advantage of offering a true downtown experience that alludes to the vital center of the region once embodied by downtown.

Place Strategies

7. **The Canal Court** – The Canal Court is located at the northwest corner of Calhoun Street. It faces the entrance to the hotel and regional facility. It is a hard surfaced square dominated by the “feeder canal” celebratory water feature and surrounded by residential flats over commercial buildings. The buildings create a tight and enclosed space: a public living room conducive to outdoor seating, restaurants and cafes.

8. **Calhoun Street** – The mixed residential commercial spine extends from south of the Canal Court to Market Square (see description below). The commercial mix along Calhoun Street should be carefully calibrated to create a place capable of competing with similar suburban “life style” centers through joint management techniques, programmed activities and amenities. It should include a mixture of local enterprises and national name stores. Calhoun Street is lined by townhouses with commercial uses on the ground.
5. Conceptual Development Plan

floor and by flats over commercial building types. A water feature runs the length of the street and is described in Place Strategy 2.

9. **The crossing of Calhoun and 6th Streets** – The crossing of Calhoun and 6th Streets represents what is known as the 100% corner of the development: the physical and social center of the North River area. To celebrate the crossing status and to enable a surge in social activities, the four corner buildings will be designed to create small open space areas.

10. **Market Square** – Market Square anchors Calhoun Street on the southeast corner of the development. Development around Market Square is centered on the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the historic Freight House. There are several proposals on how to reuse the Freight House: it can become the location for a year-round market to house farmer stands and small retail outlets; or it can be transformed into a public art and technology laboratory.

11. **Parking** – Parking for Calhoun Street and residential units is accommodated in two linked parking structures located between 6th and 4th Streets, and by two surface parking areas located south of the Canal Court and in the interior of the block between 6th and 5th Streets. This type of parking arrangement is consistent with the “Park Once” methodology that takes advantage of the quality of the walking experience throughout the site and of the compact radius of the development to increase the presence of pedestrians in the streets.
Area 4: The Civic District

The Civic District is located on the northeast edge of the North River site. It is a critical part of the development because it is the gateway to the site and the downtown coming from the north. The area has a concentration of civic and commercial uses. The location at the north of the development and along Clinton Street provides for easy in and out movements for residents and visitors using the facilities.

Place Strategies

12. Anchor the northern edge of the Civic District with a public building – Ideas from the public suggested the need for some type of flexible facility dedicated to cultural activities. It could be used for performances, shows, and exhibits and other cultural activities. While the facility should not compete with the existing Performing Art Center and Art Museum located in the downtown core, the proposed building could be used as a laboratory and showplace for activities that do not fit the schedule and requirements of the more established facilities; it would provide a flexible showcase for local visual and performing artists. The building located at the southwest corner of Clinton and Putnam Streets has tremendous visibility and could become a visual landmark to identify the North Side development. As a civic building, it could have a unique appearance and set the tone for the level of architectural and design quality expected throughout the site.

13. Create a Civic Esplanade and maintain sightlines to Science Central – Science Central is a downtown landmark and a significant existing attribute in the redevelopment of the North River area. With the extension of Putnam Street to Elizabeth, Science Central would become visible to traffic moving eastward.
5. Conceptual Development Plan

The Civic Esplanade, created as a visual extension of Putnam Street, would maintain the unencumbered vista of Science Central and visually connect the existing landmark to the proposed new civic uses and regional attractions in the area.

14. **Locate a row of townhouses south of the Civic Esplanade** – Townhouses of varying height are recommended to lend scale to the Civic Esplanade and to minimize the visual impact of the proposed regional facility.

15. **Locate a regional attraction facility and supporting hotel along Clinton Street** – As described in *Chapter 3: Background* and in the Overview section (above), there is a strong desire to locate a regional facility on the North River site. Specific feedback from the July 23 design workshop clearly indicated its desirable location as the northern section of the site. As specified in the plan, the facility would be directly linked to a hotel facing the development’s main north-south street and occupy an area of 90,000 square feet. The hotel would be designed to not exceed five stories in height while the facility itself should not exceed four stories. By comparison, the proposed facility would be comparable in size and layout to the “Caribbean Cove,” the very successful indoor waterpark in Indianapolis. If further study determines that such a facility is neither feasible nor desirable, the area occupied by the facility can be redesigned to accommodate a large retail anchor and/or additional townhouses. In both instances the prevailing form and massing of the development should be maintained.

16. **Locate a parking deck within the District** – The Civic District would require the building of a three- to four-story parking deck to accommodate the parking requirements of the proposed commercial and civic facilities and the townhouses within the District.

17. **Locate a natatorium facility in the expanded Lawton Park** – Please refer to place strategy 20 for the expansion of Lawton Park.
The idea of a natatorium in the North River area is a carry-over from the 49 Blueprint Plus initiatives. It is also a response to ideas from the public that envisions some type of sport facility in the area. The feasibility analysis, revealed a “strong perceived need for an additional indoor water facility in the area,” specifically a 50 meter pool that, while primarily for local use, could also host larger swimming meets that draw participants and their families from outside the Fort Wayne area. As noted in Blueprint Plus, “Fort Wayne has been successful at hosting major youth sporting events…attracting large numbers of teams from around the country to major competitions.” The location of the natatorium facility in Lawton Park has a historic precedent. In 1916 “the combined efforts of the Fort Wayne Daily News and of the Fort Wayne Rotary Club” raised funds for a pool in Lawton Park. The exact location of the original pool is not clear, however. The proposed natatorium would include an Olympic size 50 meter pool and a diving well, and it is located immediately south of the Science Central building.

**Area 5: The Residential Buffer**

The purpose of the Residential Buffer area is to address the public’s desire to protect the neighborhoods surrounding the North River site while maintaining continuity and connectivity between the new and existing neighborhoods. The Residential Buffer area is located at the western edge of the North River site, and it is centered on Harrison Street north.

**Place Strategies**

18. **Locate attached single family units on Harrison Street north of Fifth Street** – The attached single family type recommended for Harrison Street, north of Fifth Street, are the lowest density types found in the North River development. They include single family units attached in sequences of two to three units. Each unit has access to a back yard, an alley, and has an ancillary unit (a garage, storage area or granny-flat). Those located to the west side of Harrison Street back up to single-family houses in the Bloomingdale neighborhood. Those located on the east side of Harrison Street back up against the mixed-use townhouses along the development’s Main Street.

19. **Locate a mixture of townhouses, lofts, and live-work units on Harrison Street north of Fifth Street** – The residential types recommended south of Fifth Street are denser than those to the north. They consist of attached townhouses that can be built as loft and live-work units as well. The increase in density is in part due to a preference expressed by the public to intensify uses in the proximity of the river. The proposed building types reflect the current character of Harrison Street, a mixture of residential and
industrial buildings that also extends south west of the site along 3rd and 4th Streets. The choice of the proposed building types is designed again to smooth the transition between existing neighborhoods and the North River site.

**Area 6: The Green Infrastructure**

The public envisioned a complex green infrastructure made up of small intimate areas, celebratory parks, grand parks, and extensive connectivity via trails and sidewalks within the site and connecting the site to the region.

**Place Strategies**

20. **Expand Lawton Park to the north and to the south** – This strategy is in part a carry over from Blueprint Plus and responds to the need to expand Lawton Park to accommodate the intensification of uses in the North River area. It proposes to expand the park northward in the city property currently used for public works vehicles and green houses. It also proposed to expand the park southward with the closing of 4th Street between Clinton Street and Spy Run Avenue. The park would then extend all the way to the St. Mary’s River, this time maintaining a soft edge.

21. **Establish a pedestrian bridge connecting Headwaters and Lawton Parks** – The North River plan recommends creating a
pedestrian bridge to the east of the Clinton Street Bridge connecting Headwaters and Lawton Parks. The bridge would de facto create a large and diverse regional central park in downtown Fort Wayne with strong attractions for families within the immediate region. A link between the two parks to the west of the Clinton Street Bridge is already included in the plan to redesign the bridge. Existing parking at the Skate Park would be removed. Skate Park users will park in the North River redevelopment as part of a “park once” strategy to engender more walking.

22. **Expand and improve existing trails** – The River Esplanade can become the central hub of a network of trails connecting the North River site to the region. Specifically, the plans contemplate a north spur of a walking and bike trail along Clinton Street with the possibility of connecting with an existing rail right-of-way running north of the site. The plans also connect the trails north of the river with existing trails to the south through the proposed pedestrian bridge, allowing for pedestrian-friendly, safe access from the site to trails to the south of the river.
6. Transportation Plan

Introduction

The transportation system plays a critical role in defining the character of any community and it is no different in the North River area of Fort Wayne. Transportation issues in the North River area span the study area boundaries and should be discussed both at the local and regional levels. Clinton Street and Spy Run Avenue, in particular, are important corridors for the continued evolution of Downtown Fort Wayne, and the North River area.

The primary transportation challenge of this plan is to balance the livability improvements needed to ensure success of the North River project with requirement to accommodate the regional transportation roles of Clinton Street and Spy Run Avenue.

Livability is focused on balancing vehicular service requirements of North River with business, neighborhood and pedestrian needs. Since the focus of Clinton Street and Spy Run Avenue is currently skewed toward vehicular service, large gains in livability for the corridor can be made with rather minor changes to vehicular service. This chapter introduces the Principles of Livable Transportation in the first section and then applies those principles in the Transportation Analysis and Actions section.
Principles of Livable Transportation
Conventional Approach to Transportation Planning

The approach to transportation planning over the last forty years throughout the Country as well as in Fort Wayne has been focused on moving more cars. As a consequence, transportation planners and engineers have focused on only two transportation solutions: make roads bigger, or make roads more efficient. Due to the urban context of the North River Area and its redevelopment expectations, the single-minded transportation approach was not used for the North River Conceptual Development Plan.

A Balanced Approach to Transportation Planning

A balanced approach to transportation planning recognizes the interrelationship between land use and transportation planning. This approach broadens the definition of transportation planning to include the movement of people by cars, transit, bicycling, and walking. This approach also recognizes the value of improving the quality of trips, utilizing land use solutions to resolve transportation problems, as well as the economic impacts of transportation on land use. The redevelopment plan for North River will employ a balanced approach to transportation issues.

Street Network

Basic transportation planning principles suggest that a traditional network of streets has more capacity than the suburban sparse hierarchy. The fundamental reason why a network of small streets outperforms a sparse hierarchy of larger streets is that streets become less (not more) efficient as their size increases. Instead of an efficiency of scale as the street gets larger we experience a "diseconomy" of scale. A highly connected grid of streets provides numerous, redundant opportunities to make left turns.

This contrasts with a sparse network pattern in which left turns are gathered up from multiple locations and focused at a single location.

The long-term redevelopment strategy for increasing vehicular capacity in the North River area is focused on increasing the street network within the area. The most significant of which is the long-term extension of Calhoun Street from 4th Street to State Boulevard. This action will provide a needed alternative route to Clinton Street/Spy Run Avenue and Wells Street.

Street Users – North River Project Area

The proposed streets in the North River project area will have many different users. Their obvious role of providing service to vehicular traffic will likely grow in the next 20 years. However, successful redevelopment of the North River area is dependent on every street, including Clinton Street and Spy Run Avenue, being designed for all of its users and for solutions that meet and balance all of its user's needs. Besides their vehicular transportation role, the street system needs to better meet the transportation needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. Equally important, transportation
planners need to recognize and propose design solutions to facilitate Clinton’s Street's and Spy Run Avenue’s community responsibilities of supporting commerce (the exchanges of goods and services) and their proper functioning as the access streets to the area’s premier public space: Lawton and Headwaters Parks.

**Street - Capacity**

Traditionally a street's capacity has been narrowly defined by its vehicular capacity and speed. Unfortunately, measuring capacity solely through only vehicles neglects to recognize all of the other users of the street. The redevelopment strategy for North River measures street capacity by the number people and community functions it serves and therefore will outline design solutions, which improve the broader capacity of the area.
Transportation Analysis and Actions

Existing Traffic Conditions

The existing vehicle traffic conditions within the North River study area are generally operating at an acceptable level of service (LOS C or above). This assessment examined eight intersections surrounding the project site. Only two intersections are operating at a questionable level of service:

- State Blvd and Spy Run Avenue – LOS F - 150+ Seconds of Delay
- State Boulevard and Clinton Street – LOS D – 40 Seconds of Delay

Fortunately both intersections are programmed to be improved with the proposed State Boulevard realignment and widening project. This project involves the widening of State Boulevard’s two lane section between Wells Street and Clinton Street from two lanes to five lanes. In addition, an additional west bound through lane is being added to State Boulevard between Clinton Street and Spy Run Avenue.
6. Transportation Plan

**North River Site, Development Program, and Trip Generation**

The Conceptual Development Plan for the North River area was developed based on the urban design framework established during the July design charrette. The land development program as proposed will generate a total of 18,612 daily trips ends and 1,611 p.m. peak hour trip ends and 1,270 a.m. peak hour trip ends based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers trip generation rate documented in the table below.

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<th>Category</th>
<th>ITE Code</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Daily Trip Ends</th>
<th>Total PM Peak</th>
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<td>330</td>
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<td>2,511</td>
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<td>230</td>
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<td>Recreation Center</td>
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<td>30,000 SF</td>
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<td>41</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Street Network

The street network being recommended for the North River Conceptual Development Plan is designed to improve both north/south and east/west street connectivity. This robust street network will allow traffic associated with the North River project to have minimal impacts on existing street intersections and improve the livability of the Clinton Street and Wells Street transportation corridors.

Key elements of the plan, include:

- Extending Calhoun Street north to Jacobs Avenue and eventually to State Boulevard.
- Extending Putnam Street east to Elizabeth Avenue.
- Extending 6th Street east to 4th Street. (Potential also exists to connect 6th street to Tennessee Avenue as a longer range project.)

This transportation analysis assumed that State Boulevard would be widened as previously described. It also assumed that Clinton Street would be realigned as proposed by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Alternative One of the Clinton Street realignment proposes the following:

- Constructing a new bridge over Spy Run Creek
- Realigning Westbrook and Jacobs Avenue.
- Shifting Clinton Street east to soften the existing curve at Jacobs Avenue.
- Maintaining existing alignment south of Elizabeth Avenue.
Traffic Distribution

Traffic distribution was determined using existing turning volumes from traffic data provided by the City of Fort Wayne.

Vehicle trips generated from the proposed development have been added to existing street volumes to calculate traffic impacts. The graphics below indicate the calculated inbound and outbound trip distribution based on the conceptual development plan.
**Future Traffic Conditions**

Future vehicle traffic conditions, with the proposed redevelopment and recommended street network for the North River Study Area, will improve every intersection in the study area. The analysis indicates a decrease in vehicle delays and an improvement in the PM Peak Hour traffic operations.

One intersection, State Boulevard and Spy Run Avenue will continue to operate at an LOS F. However, the overall delay at the State Boulevard and Spy Run Avenue intersection will decrease by over 50 seconds.

Two key modifications account for the improved traffic operations:

- Widening State Boulevard between Wells Street and Spy Run Avenue.
- Calhoun connection to State Boulevard, reducing the vehicles required to use either Wells Street or Spy Run Avenue.
Calhoun Street – Commercial Land Uses

Calhoun Street will be the future main street of the North River project area. The design of Calhoun Street should be focused on the pedestrian and retailing experience while accommodating vehicular access. This plan proposes the cross section as shown in the graphic below.
Calhoun Street – Residential Land Uses

Calhoun Street, north of the Putnam extension to Elizabeth, is proposed to be a primarily residential street. The design of the street softens the sidewalk condition to reflect adjacency to residential uses. The proposed section for this street is shown below.
Clinton Street

Clinton Street is a very important corridor for the North River project area and is the primary address and gateway to the area as well as the expanded Lawton Park. The design of Clinton Street needs to better balance its continued primary access route to Downtown Fort Wayne with its role as a gateway for the North River area and Lawton park.

The design of Clinton Street should introduce on-street parking along the North River side (west-side) of the corridor. The introduction of on-street parking will enable the land uses along the corridor to be oriented to the roadway and make the area more comfortable for pedestrians.

Together, the building placement, on-street parking, and pedestrian activity will contribute to slowing and improving safety for vehicular traffic along the corridor. The proposed cross section for Clinton Street is shown below.

Recommended Clinton Street Section.
Chapter 5 describes 10 place strategies that reflect the views of the public and of the Task Force as developed through the charrette process. This chapter presents eight recommendations each agreed to by the Task Force at their final meeting held in Fort Wayne on August 23rd, 2007. These recommendations indicate what the Mayor and the City should do to initiate implementation of the North River plan described in this report.

1. **Secure the land**

   The Task Force strongly recommends that the City exercise the option negotiated with the OmniSource Corporation after appropriate due diligence regarding environmental issues on the site and purchase the 29 acres of land located north of the St. Mary’s River, west of Clinton Street, south of the former YWCA property, and east of Harrison Street. The Task Force expressed the belief that ownership of the property is key to the successful implementation of the North River plan; provides the City with control over planning the future of this strategic real estate in Downtown Fort Wayne; protects the higher purpose and common good values expressed by the plan; and, enables the City to seek development proposal for the site.
2. **Establish an independent and sustainable panel to guide the implementation of the North River Plan and market the plan**

   The Task Force recognizes that there is administrative support in place to foster development in the North River area. The proposed panel’s role would be to advocate for the North River conceptual plan and the ideas and principles that the plan embodies. The panel would serve as a steward of those ideas and principle in the lengthy transition into implementation. Its independence will enable it to play a critical role in the redevelopment process. Its continuity over time will sustain commitment to the plan across inevitable changes to the City’s elected and appointed bodies who have jurisdiction in the process. The panel can be an extension of the current Task Force and several members have expressed interest in continuing in the process. Finally, the panel can market the plan internally and externally, therefore maintaining interest and support for the redevelopment process.

3. **Dedicate the proposed right-of-way network and pursue planned road improvements**

   Both the Blueprint Plus and North River plan have recommended the establishment of a connected network of streets linking the site to downtown, to existing neighborhoods east, west and north of the site. The Task Force recommends that the City proceed with the dedication of the street network proposed by the plan to: protect the walkable and pedestrian scaled dimension of the plan; to take advantage of the choices and movement opportunities inherent to a road network; to reduce pressure on Clinton Street; and to gain full benefit of the planned improvements for Clinton Street and State Avenue being implemented by the Indiana Department of Transportation (DOT).

4. **Adopt the North River’s planning and design principles and conceptual development plan map as an amendment to the comprehensive plan**

   The Task Force recommends that the Council adopt the planning and design principles and the conceptual development plan map developed for the North River Plan as an integral component of the Plan-it Allen! comprehensive plan. In doing so, the City will empower appropriate agencies to assist in the development process and to develop necessary regulatory steps to ensure that the vision expressed through the plan gets implemented.

5. **Develop a package of incentives to facilitate development**

   There are several incentive programs already in place to facilitate the redevelopment process, TIF and CRED are among them. The Task Force recommends that a full array of incentives be in place as development negotiations take place including density bonuses, parking
facilitation and an expedited approval process for plans that are consistent with the ideas and principles of the North River plan.

6. **Pursue a coordinated development strategy while taking steps to ensure that all development is consistent with the plan**

   The development of the North River plan will require testing a variety of options. The Task Force debated whether or not a single developer strategy would best suit the site as opposed to a strategy involving several developers. They concluded that there are benefits to both and recommended that the City coordinate the development process whether through a single developer or through multiple developers while putting in place tools to ensure that the development is consistent with the plan. In particular the Task Force recommended that efforts be made to involve local developers and builders whenever possible.

7. **Conduct studies needed to identify market potential, phasing, and catalyst projects and to determine the fiscal impact of the proposed development**

   The Task Force recognizes the need for a number of studies that can help in the implementation process. In particular a study is recommended to identify the retail market potential for the North River area as well as a study to determine the fiscal impact of the proposed development. The former should be aimed at positioning the new retail development in the North River competitively in the region, determining what is the area’s market potential, and evaluating the competitive advantages presented by the proposed residential population and proximity to downtown. It should also address in strategic terms what steps need to be taken to realize that market potential. The latter is consistent with principle #5, seeking fiscally responsible public investments that create “ongoing, sustainable economic returns for the community.” Further market analysis should also be conducted to ascertain catalytic potential of the proposed regional facility and its phasing.

8. **Convene and staff a commission of government agencies, stakeholders, and the public to recommend how to care for, preserve, and promote the river and riverfront quality and use**

   The Task Force recognized the profound impact and value of the St. Mary’s river on the North River plan. The Task Force recommended that existing and proposed initiatives focused on the river be coordinated and that governmental agencies, stakeholders, advocacy groups be convened to develop shared recommendations on how to take care of the river, preserve it, improve its quality, and promote uses of the river and its riverfront.