

Strategic Planning and Action for Revitalizing Communities (SPARC)

NADO Annual Training Conference

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2025

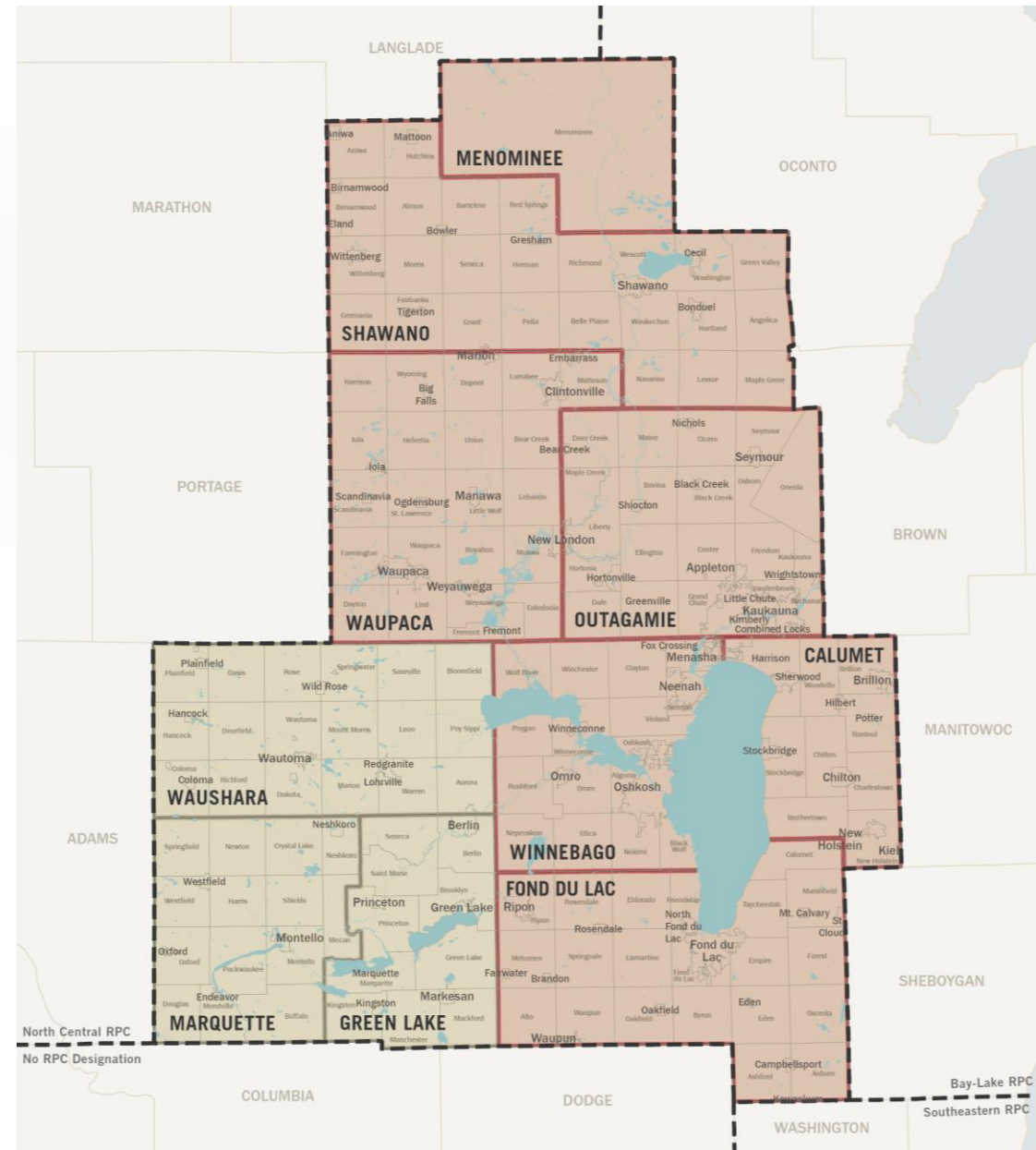


**East Central
Wisconsin**
REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION

Who is ECWRPC

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC)

- Created in 1972 under Wisconsin State Statute (§66.945, now §66.0309)
- Established to promote intergovernmental cooperation, regional planning, and a shared vision for the future
- Serves as a coordinating organization among federal, state, and local governments in the region
- Provides technical assistance, data, and planning services directly to individual units of government
- Supports communities in transportation planning, economic development, environmental stewardship, and community design
- Designated as the region's Economic Development District (EDD) by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- Recognized by the U.S. Department of Transportation as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for:
 - Appleton (Fox Cities) MPO
 - Oshkosh MPO
 - Fond du Lac MPO (designated in 2002)



WHAT is SPARC?

- Assists Wisconsin communities under 12,000 population
- Aims to energize and inspire new ideas for development, capacity building, and downtown/commercial corridor revitalization
- Provides free design and technical assistance to help communities visualize projects and explore new possibilities
- Helps develop realistic, priority-based projects that align with each community's long-term goals
- Brings together a team of subject-matter experts in:
 - Economic development
 - Transportation and planning
 - Engineering
 - Landscape architecture

Entirely free of charge to participating communities

SPARC

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ACTION FOR REVITALIZING COMMUNITIES



Wrap Around Services

- Continue to work assist communities after the SPARC program to complete projects
- Dedicated Grants Coordinator added to the team
- Wrap around service with an emphasis on:
 - Matchmaking and grant identification
 - Application guidance
 - Ability to bring these projects to fruition



Application and Selection Criteria

- Competitive application process; communities were required to submit an application identifying focus area and stakeholders
- Received 26 applications in 2021, selected 8 communities
- Received 15 applications in 2022, selected 4 communities
- Received 9 applications in 2023, selected 4 communities
- Received 6 applications in 2025, selected 6 communities

Business/community need
(Can they not do it alone?)

Project potential
(Is there a project that would come out of the process?)

Capacity to help organize around the assistance?
(Can they get ready for a walk-about?)

Underserved or isolated community?
(Are the projects spread out geographically?)

Promote equity and inclusion?
(Does the project help people?)

Stimulate the local economy?
(Does the project create jobs, tax revenue)

Positive secondary impacts?
(Does the project “play it forward”?)



2021 RECIPIENTS

- City of Kaukauna (Outagamie)
- City of Omro (Winnebago)
- City of Ripon (Fond du Lac)
- City of Seymour (Outagamie)
- Marquette County (Marquette)
- Village of Hortonville (Outagamie)
- Village of Scandinavia (Waupaca)
- Village of Winneconne (Winnebago)

2022 RECIPIENTS

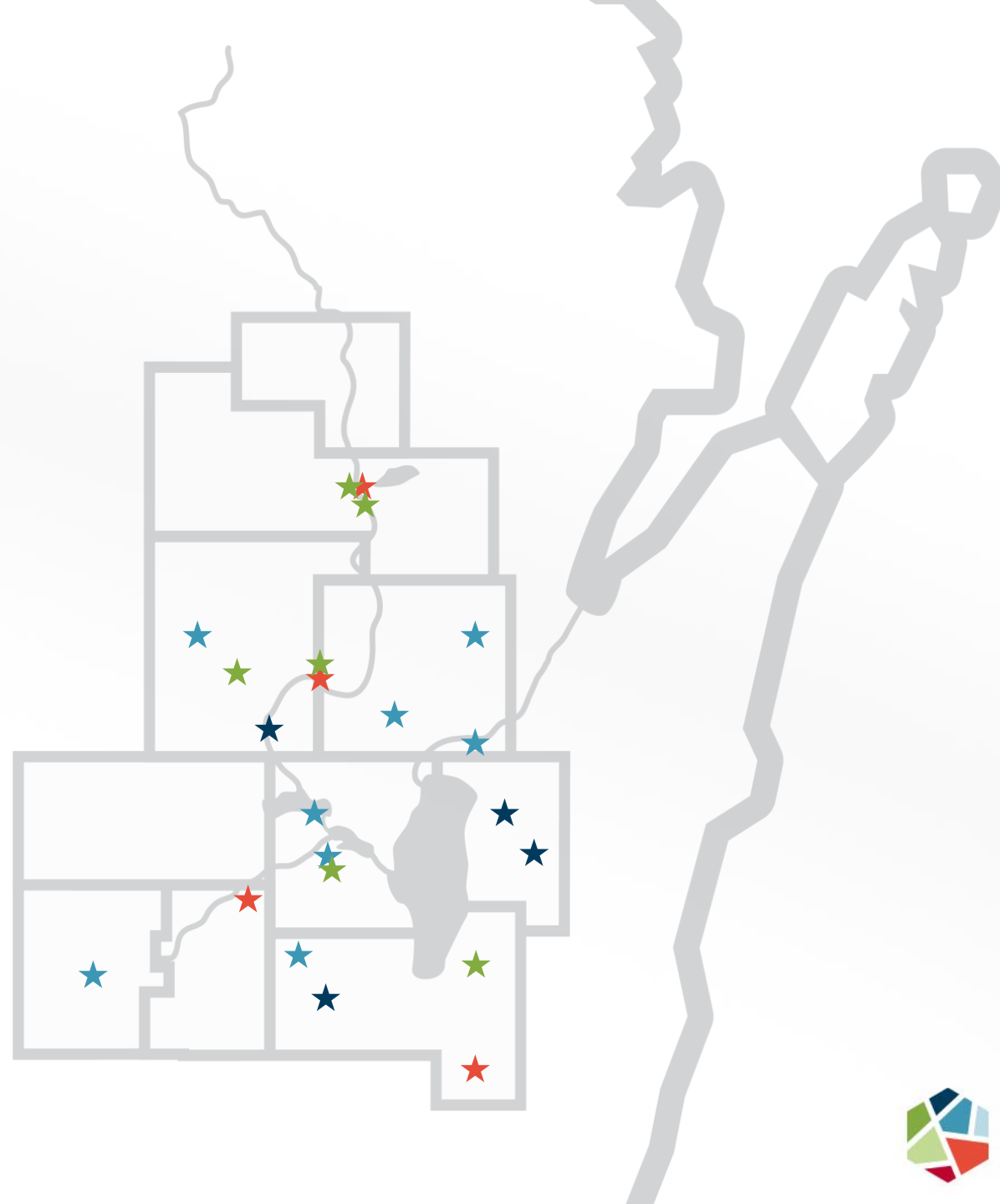
- City of Berlin (Green Lake)
- City of New London (Waupaca)
- City of Shawano (Shawano)
- Village of Campbellsport (Fond du Lac)

2023 RECIPIENTS

- City of Chilton (Calumet)
- City of New Holstein (Calumet)
- Village of Brandon (Fond du Lac)
- Village of Fremont (Waupaca)

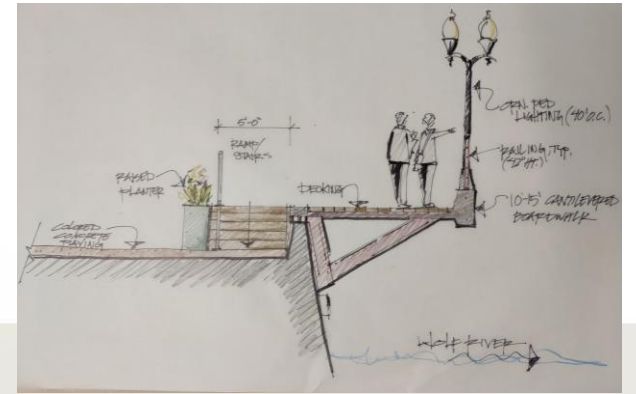
2025 RECIPIENTS

- Village of St. Cloud (Fond du Lac)
- City of Shawano (Shawano)
- Village of Bonduel (Shawano)
- City of New London (Waupaca)
- City of Waupaca (Waupaca)
- Village of Omro (Winnebago)



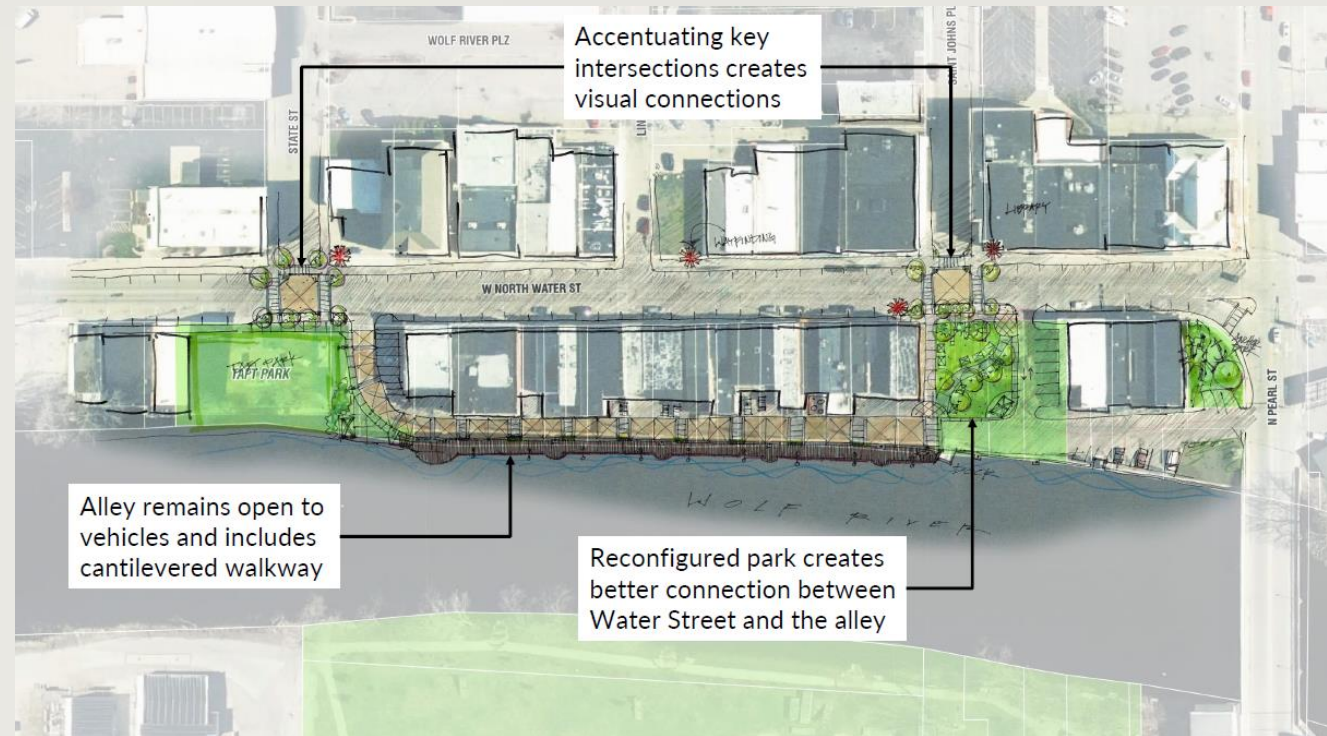
City of New London Alley Activation Project

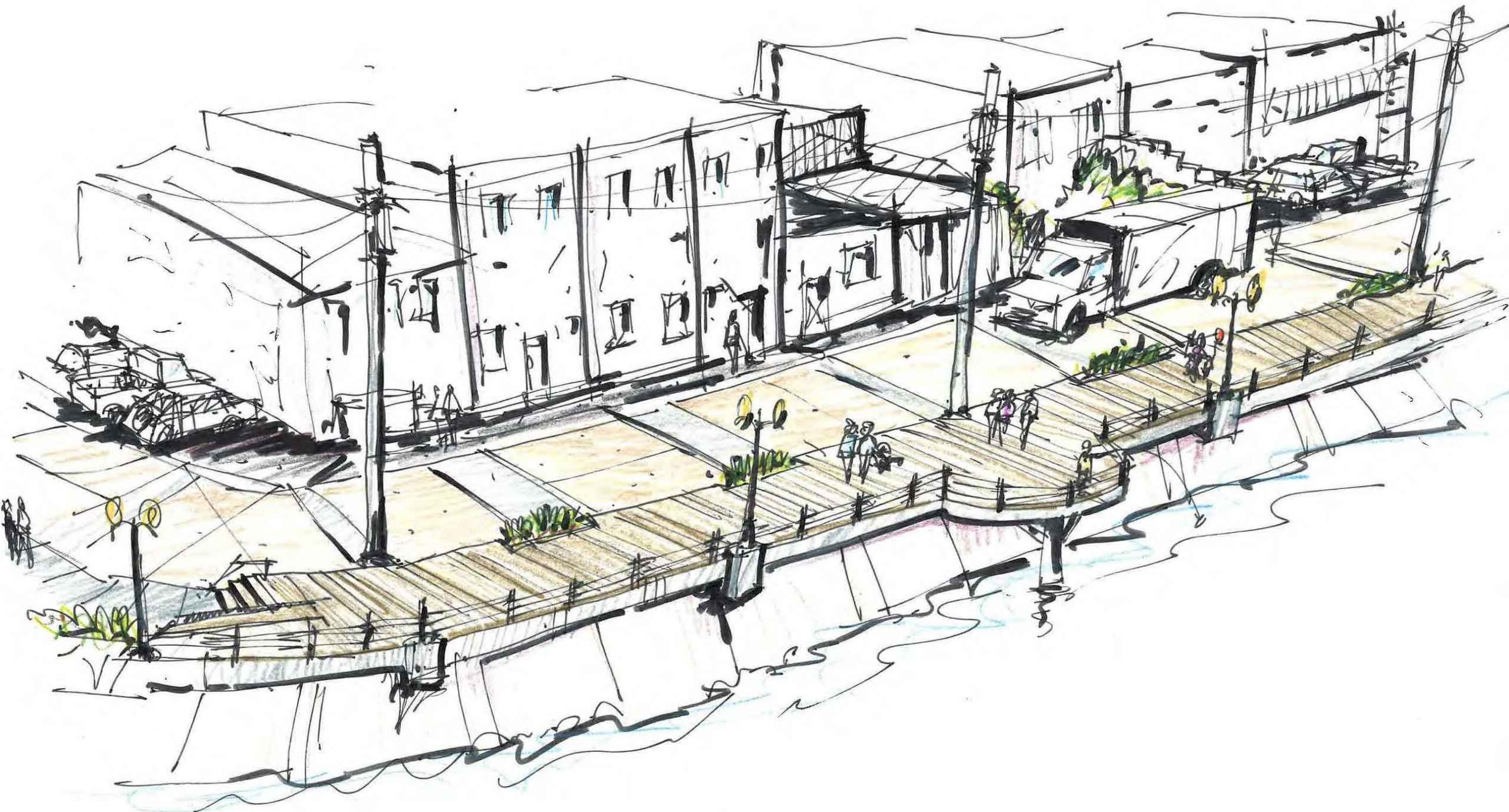
- Challenge: Redesign of rear alleyway behind downtown businesses along Wolf River



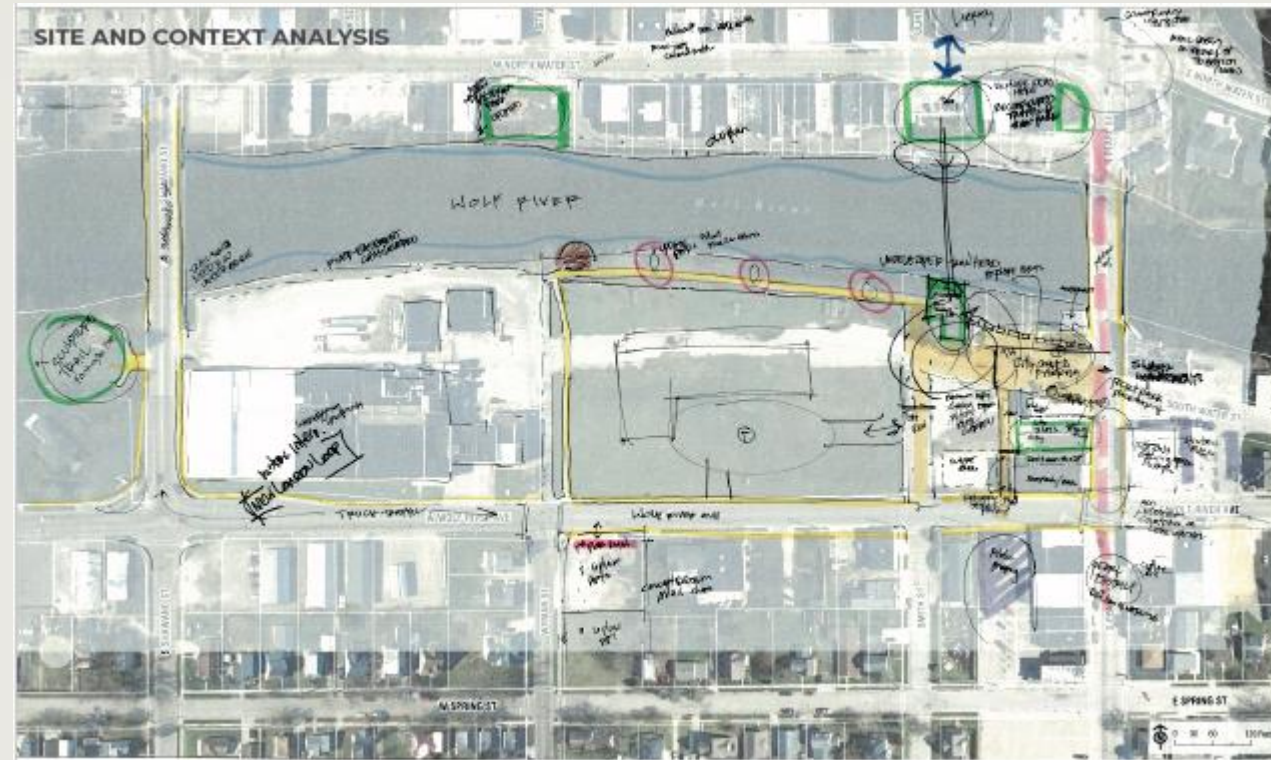
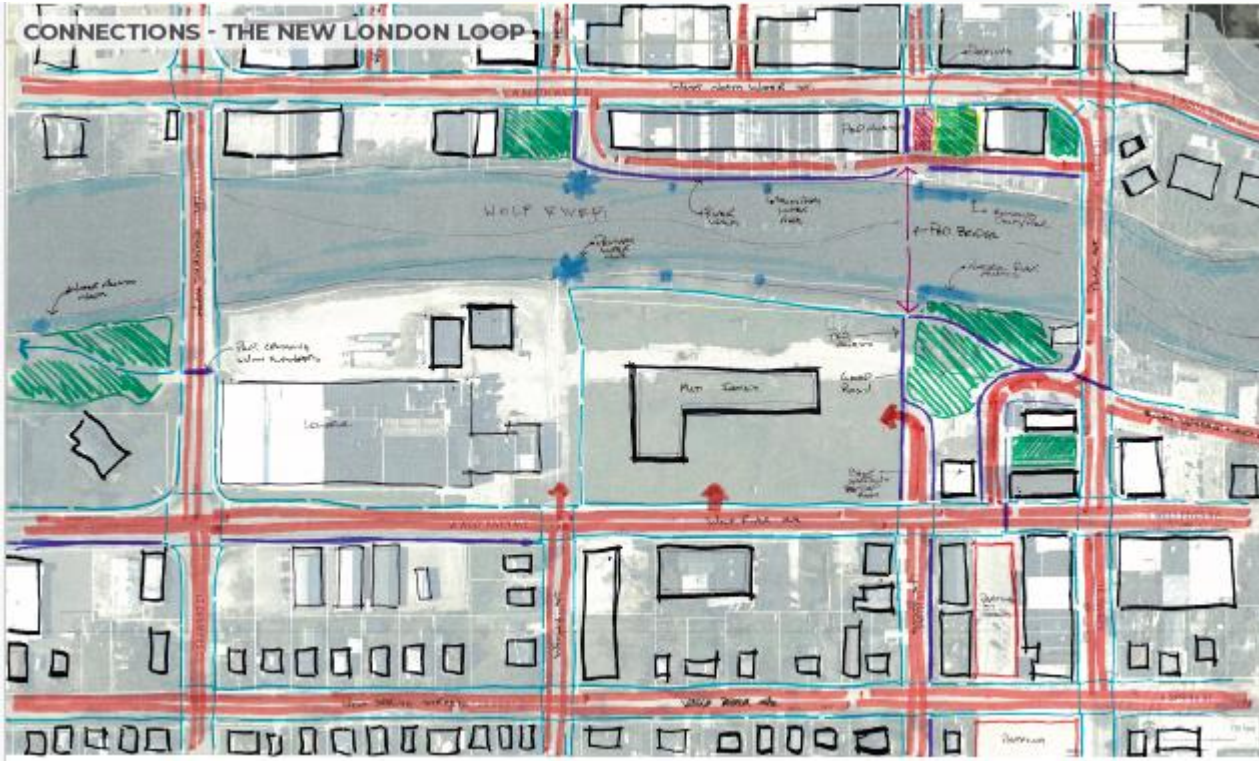
City of New London Alley Activation Project

ALLEY ACTIVATION





The New London Loop



Pearl Street Pocket Park & Anchor Park



Pearl Street Pocket Park

Anchor Park Reimagined



City of Omro – Downtown Plan

Key Recommendations

- Along Webster Avenue, pursue development on each side, with closures for events
- Remove parking at the base of the pedestrian bridge to create a seamless connection south
- Demolish the former Dollar General building and redevelop as retail
- Pursue townhome development on W Huron Street
- Continue conversations with DOT on stop signals along Highway 21
- Pursue new Public Works/EMS outside of downtown, market current Public Works site for redevelopment



City of Omro – Downtown Plan



After Work

- Grants: Assist with a vibrant spaces grant for a “Food Truck Alley” and other public infrastructure changes
- A developer has reached out and is now interested in a housing project in this area. (more discussions to come)



City of Kaukauna – 2nd Street Alley Project



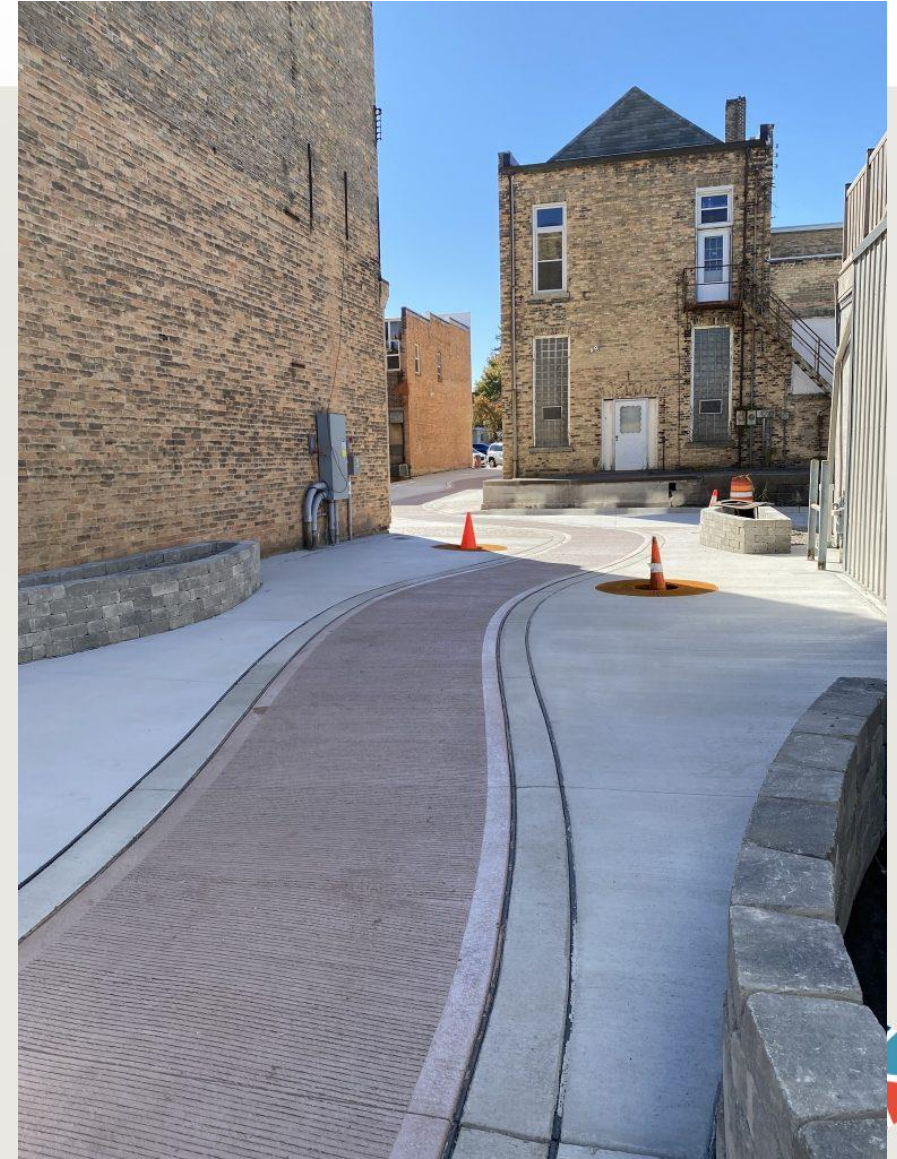
- City Condemnation and Demolition
- RDA Acquisition



City of Kaukauna – 3rd Street Alley Project



City of Kaukauna – Implementation



City of Kaukauna – Implementation Continued

Plans DO create momentum

- Utilities Partnership
- Sculpture Program
- Downtown Signage and Mural Program
- Flower and Vase Program
- Redevelopment of Key Anchor Businesses



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