

City of River Falls Community Development

2019 Council Annual Report



Prepared by the City of River Falls Community Development Department



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Introduction

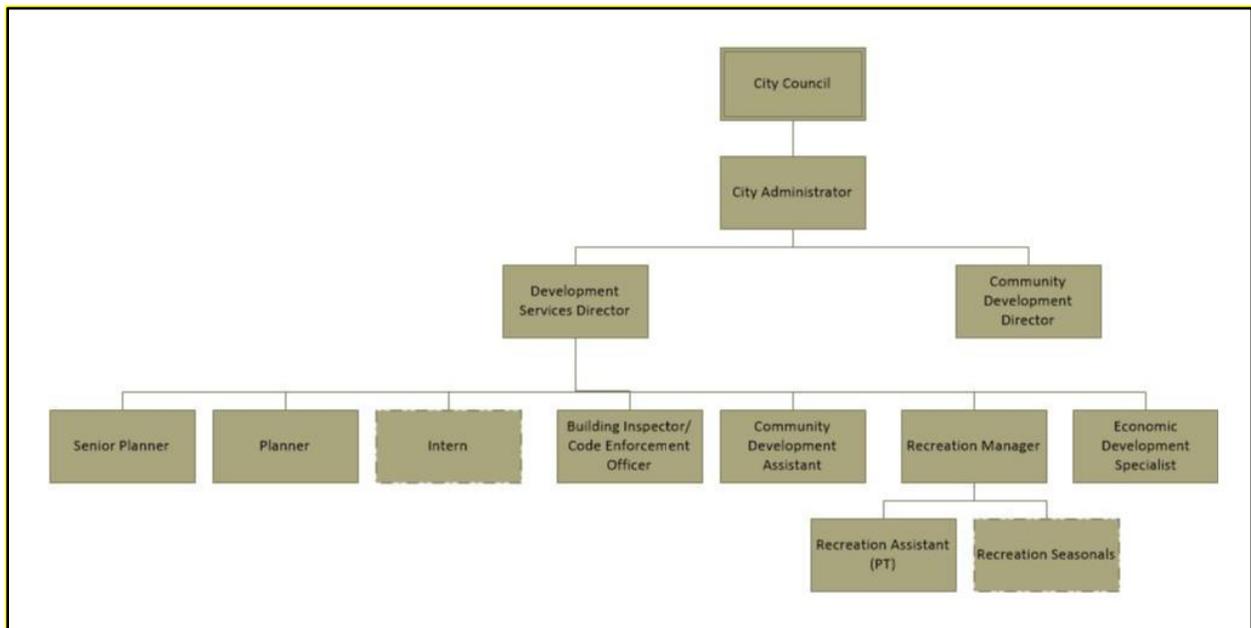
The City of River Falls Community Development Department is uniquely equipped to provide value to the City as it encounters the many economic, social and environmental challenges US cities face today. Planning is, in fact, an agent of hope in the community, affecting renewal and regeneration, and is a facet of government that uniquely focuses on the partnership of collective work to improve the conditions of the City and life in it. It is also uniquely prepared and focused on promoting a condition of sustained improvement, overlooking short term benefits in favor of the long term impact of policy on the common good and future generations.

The purpose of this Report is to document the details of the Department, including staffing, roles, and functions as well as the previous years' workload impact.

The Community Development Department is responsible for current and long-term planning, zoning, building inspections, permitting and code enforcement for the City, economic development (with Administration) and via the Recreation Division, is responsible for the City's annual recreation programming, City pool operations, campground administration, and information creation and dispersal regarding recreating in the City.

In 2019 Buddy Lucero, Community Development Director retired. In May the City hired Mike Ericson as Community Development Specialist in a temporary status.

The 2019 Department Organizational Chart is below and includes a total of 8.5 FTEs. Note, the FTE count does not include interns, temporary and seasonal staff. In 2020 the Org Chart will change significantly, with Recreation leaving ComDev, Engineering joining and with an oncoming new Community Development Director.



2019 Review

The following highlights the Departments work in 2019, including the permitting and development activity, and shows the value of the work to the City.

Development

311	Total Building Permits
\$59,762,504	Construction Value of Permits
264,025	Square Feet of Commercial/Industrial Building Permits Sold
145	Single Family Lots Available (12/31/19)
1	Final Plats Approved
6	Development Review Approvals
51	Zoning Permits Issued
\$0	Grant Funds Awarded
4.7	Acres Annexed

Recreation

Revenue	
\$36,140	Total Campground Revenue
\$5,425	Total Shelter Revenue
\$76,365	Total Recreation Revenue
Activity	
	No outdoor pool 2019
1,963	Youth activities
1,088	Adult Leagues
3,051	Total Activity Enrollment

Community Survey

Community Characteristic	2015 % Positive Rating	2017 % Positive Rating	2019 % Positive Rating
New Development	65	58	65
Housing Options	63	63	45
Public Parking	60	58	55
Travel By Bicycle	71	74	69
Overall Natural Environment	89	89	92
Governance			
Code Enforcement	54	57	60
Economic Development	55	67	56
Recreation Programs	77	82	85

Major Projects

Kinni Corridor Plan

Plan was approved by Council January 2019; Nonprofit organization is in development to implement the plan

Cooperative Boundary Agreement

Council approved an agreement with the Town of Kinnickinnic in January 2019

Large Development Planning

Depot and City Station, Main Street Apartments (1300 S Main St), Peregrine Terrace

River Falls School District

Renovations and additions to the 4 elementary schools and Middle School and High School

Glen Park Pavilion

Construction is complete

Wayfinding Plan

Phase 1 was implemented. Approximately 1/3 of signage installed

Campus Corridor Concept

Identifies future campus oriented development needs and concept plans for development along Cascade and South Main Street

Sterling Ponds Park Plan

Planning for long term park and recreation improvements in Sterling Ponds Park and surrounding neighborhood

Records Management

Continued progress, scanning paper files, and organizing/cleaning electronic files

The Depot and City Station



Main Street Apartments



Peregrine Terrace



City Council Strategic Plan 2018-2022: Vision, Mission, Values & Goals

Vision: A distinct, vibrant, and safe community with an abundance of nature and easy access to metropolitan amenities. A place where families, students and businesses flourish.

Mission: To coordinate and deliver essential services and ensure a sustainable future.

Values:

- We put people first
- We pursue excellence
- We act with integrity
- We embrace change
- We serve our community
- We consider future generations

Goals:

Connected Community

- An engaged community
- Effective communications with citizens
- Progress on Kinni Corridor Plan

Economic Vitality

- Thriving Corporate Parks
- Housing that supports economic objectives
- Clear economic development strategy

Financial Sustainability

- Prepared for financial contingencies
- Diverse revenue sources
- Excellent credit rating

Quality Municipal Services

- Satisfied citizens
- Regular review of services
- Adequate response to meet service demand
- Sustained capital investment in public infrastructure

Administration's 2019-2021 Strategic Initiatives

* Highlighted items include Community Development involvement

Ensuring Financial Stability

- Conduct a Cost of Service Study and Update Electric Rates for 2020 implementation
- Develop 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan Quality Municipal Services

Quality Municipal Services

- Complete and implement Class and Compensation Study
- Conduct an assessment of EMS services; analyze feasibility and options
- Develop Implementation Strategy for Fire Site & Facility
- Evaluate West Central Bio Solids Partnership, in-depth analysis of options
- Implement AMI for Water/Electric
- Implement North Sewer Interceptor Plan
- Implement remodel of 2815 Prairie Drive for Police Station
- Conduct Library Strategic Planning Economic Vitality

Economic Vitality

- Cooperate with State DOT on STH-35/65 & Division On/Off Ramp Project (Jug Handle)
- Develop preliminary engineering design for Mann Valley
- Evaluate and implement the Campus Corridor Plan for infill development
- Update Downtown Master Plan Connected Community

Connected Community

- Assist UWRF with new science facility & coordinated public infrastructure improvements at 2nd & Cascade
- Conduct 2019 Citizen Survey
- Update Outdoor Recreation Plan

Department Values and Mission Statement

The Values of the City of River Falls Community Development Department:

Work Culture

- We will be ethical
- We will strive to always learn
- We will be innovative
- We will find meaningful work
- We will actively engage and be respectful

Customer Services

- We will be ambassadors of the City, City government and the Department
- We will strive to offer the fastest quality services
- We will be solution oriented and resourceful
- We will monitor and be responsive to community satisfaction
- We will provide balanced services at affordable prices

Partnerships

- We will be collaborative and strive for win-win solutions
- We will attract talent inside and outside the organization to fulfill our mission
- We will be creative in strategizing on projects, looking to the P-5 for partners (Public, Private, Non Profit, Philanthropic and People)
- We will be available to assist other organizations in improving the quality of life in River Falls

Community/Urbanism

- We will work for the community's best interest
- We will maintain a cooperative intergovernmental perspective
- We will promote a compact urban form
- We will maintain and respect River Falls' unique personality, sense of place and character
- We will work to be a community of real neighborhoods and diverse districts, and we will support the conservation of the natural environment and the preservation of our built environment
- We will advocate for the following principles: neighborhoods should be diverse in use and population; our community should be designed for the pedestrian, biker and ultimately transit, as well as the car; our community should be shaped by physically defined and universally accessible public spaces and community institutions; our urban places should be framed by architecture and landscape design that celebrates our local history, climate and ecology

The Mission of the City of River Falls Community Development Department is to guide future growth and development through effective planning, zoning, permitting, enforcement, and maintain and promote sustainability by taking care of the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations.

Employee Expectations

The City of River Falls Community Development Department staff are required to adhere to the most current City of River Falls Employee Handbook and Policies.

In addition to the requirements of the Employee Handbook, the Community Development Department will:

- Strive for respectful, collaborative relationships with other City departments and staff through responsiveness, good listening skills, and empowering others with information.
- To the best of our abilities, foresee deadlines and request information from other departments well ahead of time, to avoid 'crisis management'.
- Provide customer service as a top priority, assisting the public when able with the concept of "first contact, first to serve", being accessible, listening, being resourceful and solution oriented and communicating in a timely fashion to address the needs of the public.
- Hold initial development plans and discussions, proprietary information and other similar information in confidence until such time as the owner of the information decides to share it with the public unless we are required to provide it by law.
- Be respectful with each other, never criticize others in a public setting, be candid with each other, offer assistance to each other and have a sincere interest in the thoughts and ideas of others above our own.
- Manage projects deliberately, taking into account adequate quality control, legal review and economic impacts to safeguard the City and provide for a successful end product.



From left to right: Keri Schreiner, Economic Development Specialist; Cindi Danke, Recreation Manager; Angie Bond, Community Development Assistant; Brenda Rundle, Recreation Assistant; Amy Peterson, Development Services Director; Mike Ericson, Community Development Specialist; David Hovel, Building Inspector; Sam Wessel, Planner; Brandy Howe, Senior Planner.

Department Positions – Descriptions and Time Distributions

Intern Program

The program was put on hold in 2018 and 2019, with anticipation of resuming in 2020. In the past, internships focused on GIS, but possible future options include Historic Preservation, Planning or Economic Development.

Recreation Seasonal Positions (approximately 25 per summer)

Positions include life guards and programming staff. Staffing was reduced some in 2019, due to Glen Park renovations. No lifeguards due to no outdoor pool. Swim classes offered for only Level 1 to 6 and no parent/child or preschool lessons offered as High School Pool was utilized.

Recreation Assistant (Part-time)

Brenda Rundle

Assists the Recreation Manager in planning, organizing, coordinating and supervising a community recreation program for seniors, adults, and/or youth. Programs include cultural arts, physical activities, special interest classes and other programs. Coordinate day to day administrative office work both routine and complex.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Weekly Time Distribution</u>
Registration/facility rental	30%
Customer service	30%
Preparing annual activity guide	20%
Preparing supplies/paperwork for seasonal staff	10%
Leading/monitoring classes/staff	5%
Website & social media	5%

Recreation Manager

Cindi Danke

Plans, organizes, coordinates and supervises the community recreation program for seniors, adults, and youth. Program includes cultural arts, physical activities, special interest classes and other programs. Coordinate day to day administrative office work both routine and complex.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Weekly Time Distribution</u>
General customer service	30%
Registration	20%
Staff management	20%
Meetings	20%
Reports, scheduling, social media	10%

Community Development Assistant

Angie Bond

Supports the Community Development Division with primary responsibilities assisting the Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer. Responsible for performing administrative work such as receiving the public, providing customer assistance, cashiering and maintaining record systems. This position is responsible for maintaining current information relative to housing standards, property records systems, filling procedures, document inspections, submitting reports to Council, Plan Commission and State and Federal governments as required.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Weekly Time Distribution</u>
Building permits	35%
Customer service	20%
Code enforcement	15%
Department support	15%
Sign permits	10%
Rental licensing	5%

Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer

David Hovel

Responsible for municipal code activities relating to rental housing, to single and two-family housing, HVAC, electrical, plumbing, commercial construction and erosion control, and shall assist State Inspectors with multiple family, commercial, and industrial inspections. Maintains reports, meets with the public on code-related matters, investigates building standards, land use and issues and collects permit and impact fees.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Weekly Time Distribution</u>
Building inspections – residential	50%
Permit review/issue	10%
Code questions & consultations	10%
Building inspections – commercial	10%
Zoning assistance	5%
Code enforcement	5%
Reports	5%
Miscellaneous	4%
Assist other departments	1%

Planner/GIS

Sam Wessel,

Provides current planning, technical and occasional long-range planning support to the Department. Duties include customer service for day to day current planning needs, GIS support, developing planning initiatives, guiding committees, and providing support to department objectives. The Planner provides customer service, leads and represents the Department at meetings and is a liaison to the community.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Weekly Time Distribution</u>
GIS	25%
Committees/Meeting prep	25%
Long range planning	25%
Customer Service	20%
Code enforcement	5%

Senior Planner

Brandy Howe, AICP

Leads the current planning for the City, leads short and long-term planning projects, implements and manages City development processes, ensures compliance with approved plans and ordinances, conducts research and report writing, legislative analysis, and special reports. The Senior Planner provides customer service, serves as a Department liaison to the community and a variety of City boards and commissions and serves as the Zoning Administrator for the City upon delegation of the Community Development Director.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Weekly Time Distribution</u>
Current planning	50%
Committees/Meeting prep	25%
Special projects	20%
GIS	3%
Code enforcement	2%

Economic Development Specialist

Keri Schreiner

Builds on River Falls reputation for proactive, attentive, and effective economic development, with a primary focus on large industry development. The Economic Development Specialist will assist the City Administrator with developing and implementing economic development programs for the City with the purpose of business retention, expansion and attraction.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Weekly Time Distribution</u>
Requests for information	40%
Business retention & expansion	30%
Board/Meeting Prep	15%
Special projects	10%
Maintaining property inventory	5%

Community Development Specialist

Mike Ericson (May 2019-current)

Work with existing businesses on current and future business needs. Primary focus of connecting Twin Cities area developers, builders, and business professionals to diversify the commercial, retail and residential tax base. Complete research on a variety of topics directly related to assisting local businesses.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Weekly Time Distribution</u>
Meetings and research with Twin Cities developers and contractors	45%
Research community development issues	15%
Business retention and expansion	10%
Chamber of Commerce collaboration	10%
Recreation strategic plan	10%
Special projects	10%

Community Development Director

Buddy Lucero (thru April 2019)

The principal function is to lead major development projects as well as the Kinni Corridor Plan. The work is performed under the direct supervision of the City Administrator, but extensive leeway is granted for the exercise of independent judgement and initiative.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Weekly Time Distribution</u>
Projects	70%
Administrative	30%

Development Services Director

Amy Peterson, AICP, LEED AP

Provides leadership to operations and services of the Community Development Division including: providing administrative oversight and supervision to the planning, building inspection, economic development and recreation divisions. Serves as an internal and external resource to staff and the community. The work is performed under the direct supervision of the City Administrator. This position supports the investment by private and public partners in the built environment of the City by facilitating quality real estate development.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Weekly Time Distribution</u>
Department Administration	40%
Commission/Board Meeting Prep/Attendance	25%
Current Planning	25%
Special Projects	10%

Partnerships/Public Outreach

The following lists the external public and private partnerships the department develops and maintains:

- River Falls Chamber of Commerce
- Pierce & St. Croix Health Departments
- Habitat for Humanity
- University Wisconsin River Falls
- Chippewa Valley Technical College
- St. Croix Valley Bird Club
- Kinnickinnic Off-Road Cyclists
- Tree City USA
- River Falls Sportsman's Club
- River Falls Pickleball Association
- River Falls Community Arts Base
- Allina Health
- River Falls School District
- River Falls Boys and Girls Basketball, Youth Volleyball and Youth Soccer
- River Falls Business Improvement District
- Housing Authority
- River Falls Rotary
- River Falls Garden Club
- Community Gardens
- First National Bank
- In Balance Yoga
- WI Bike Federation
- St. Croix County EDC
- Small Business Development Corporation

Training Provided by the Community Development Department 2019/2020

- Homeowners' Building Workshop – 2019
- Seasonal Recreation Employee Training – 2019
- Contractors' Meeting – 2020

Grant Revenues – 2015 to 2019

- 2016 WI State Historical Society - Historical Architectural Survey - \$22,000
- 2016 WI DNR Stewardship Funds - Trail Heritage Park to Division Street - \$238,800
- 2015 FEMA - Hoffman Park Storm Shelter \$583,162 + \$17,725 = \$600,887
- 2017 FEMA Glen Park Storm Shelter \$637,899
- 2015 WI State Historical Society - National Historic Designation – Swinging Bridge - \$4,000
- 2016 WI DOT – Lake George Bridge - \$902,400 (unfunded)
- 2018 WI DOT – Awarded \$48,000 for the 2021 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Intergovernmental Coordination

- All City Departments
- Pierce & St. Croix County – Health Departments
- State of WI Commercial Inspectors
- Chippewa Valley Technical College (Wood Techniques Course)
- West Central Regional Planning Commission (taxi administration)
- Wisconsin DOT (taxi administration, grant applications, state highway projects)
- Town of River Falls, Clifton, Kinnickinnic, Troy (Intergovernmental Agreements, ETZ)
- State of Wisconsin Historical Society (grants)
- River Falls Business Improvement District (grants, downtown beautification and development)
- River Falls Housing Authority
- River Falls School District

Committee Work and Assignments

The following lists the committees/ commissions the department participates in and the staff assignments. The first seven highlighted are the official Boards/Committees the department staffs:

- 1. City Plan Commission – Brandy Howe, Sam Wessel, Amy Peterson**
- 2. ETZ Committee - Brandy Howe, Sam Wessel, Amy Peterson**
- 3. Board of Appeals - Brandy Howe, Sam Wessel, Amy Peterson**
- 4. Historic Preservation Commission – Brandy Howe**
- 5. Downtown Design Review Committee – as needed**
- 6. Business Improvement District – Sam Wessel**
- 7. Park and Recreation Advisory Board – Cindi Danke, Brenda Rundle, Amy Peterson**
8. Executive Team – Amy Peterson
9. FUN Committee Co-chair – Dave Hovel
10. Chippewa Valley Technical College Advisory Committee for Wood Techniques Course – Dave Hovel
11. Township meetings – Planning staff, as needed
12. Green Team – Brandy Howe, Keri Schreiner, Sam Wessel
13. Healthy Foundations – Cindi Danke
14. Youth Association Groups (Basketball, Wrestling, Gymnastics, Baseball) – Cindi Danke