

2014 Professional Awards



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ARISE: The Rock Renaissance Area Redevelopment & Implementation Strategy

Janesville, WI

Completed December 2014

Analysis & Planning

Purpose of Project

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The purpose of the Rock Renaissance Redevelopment Area and Implementation Strategy (ARISE) was to advance strategic planning for six high priority redevelopment “catalyst” sites within the 240 acre Rock Renaissance Area bordering the Rock River in Janesville’s central business district. This strategy document built upon the vision of past plans and existing assets within the downtown through a rigorous application of public meetings, market analysis, and environmental data that informed its redevelopment recommendations.

Programming for each of the six catalyst sites focused on revitalizing open spaces and streetscapes, encouraging new commercial development, and creating downtown housing. The sites were viewed not as singular developments, but rather as a contiguous downtown area that was programmed to provide a well-connected riverfront and trail network with cohesive business, entertainment, and residential districts.

The project team’s scope involved extensive community involvement. The team held a total of 19 meetings with City staff and officials, the Downtown Revitalization Committee, key stakeholders, and the general public. The team combined information gathered at these meetings with environmental data and a market analysis to document existing key assets and opportunities for improvement within the study area. These assets and opportunities in turn informed site reuse planning that addressed economic feasibility, redevelopment infrastructure requirements, remediation needs and costs, public space, river access, flood control, stormwater management and ecology. The end result of this process was an area-wide plan document that explained the planning process, illustrated proposed recommendations, and laid out an implementation plan with action steps required to realize the plan’s vision.

This implementation strategy signifies the beginning of a flourishing downtown and revitalized riverfront that together provide a healthy place for Janesville’s community to gather, thrive and grow.

Role of Landscape Architect

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Above all the landscape architect (LA) acted as the facilitator who distilled public input, environmental data, market analysis, and client needs into a cohesive strategy document. The LA coordinated the public process, reviewed and summarized all site data, provided design and redevelopment recommendations for the study area, developed an implementation plan and timeline, rendered a suite of illustrative and informational graphics, and wrote and formatted the final planning document.

The LA was the prime consultant for ARISE. The LA-led team also included environmental and structural engineers and market analysts who provided valuable background information to inform the design process.

- Environmental engineers conducted an environmental conditions analysis that synthesized the results of past environmental site assessments and identified areas where known or potential contamination issues were likely to occur.
- Structural engineers provided feasible options for the rehabilitation and modification of river flood walls and the parking deck spanning the river.
- Market analysts studied the market demand for uses within downtown Janesville that included housing, retail and services, dining, and office space. These analysts provided recommendations for uses that would most effectively build on Janesville's existing assets and market forces.

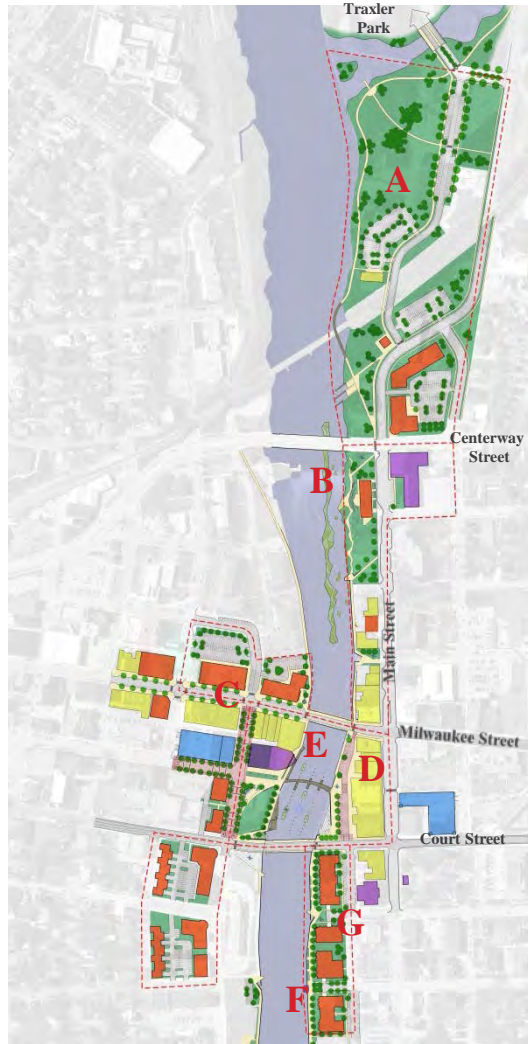
Special Factors

ARISE was part of the second round of projects funded by the US EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Program. Whereas some brownfields programs focus exclusively on cleaning up contamination, this unique grant program is focused on creating planning and implementation strategies for brownfield sites that spur redevelopment for an entire area. The program emphasizes a solid foundation of community engagement, collection of environmental, infrastructural, and economic data, and a clear strategy for brownfield site prioritization that is designed to achieve near-term results which protect public and environmental health, are economically viable, and reflect the community's vision for the area.

The project team's commitment to this area-wide strategic planning approach has already begun paying off for downtown Janesville. Prior to the plan's official approval the City began efforts to revitalize streetscapes, study the feasibility of new accessible trail connections, and even to remove a parking deck that is presently perched over the Rock River. These activities were a direct result of the ARISE Implementation Strategy.

In addition to the initial input from the public and from stakeholders that drove the team's recommendations, the ARISE strategy was presented to potential private and public project funders and members of the real estate community for their review and feedback. This innovative roundtable approach helped to ensure buy-in from members of the community who would play a critical role in enacting the plan and give the project a high probability of winning funds to continue its development momentum.

Project Plan

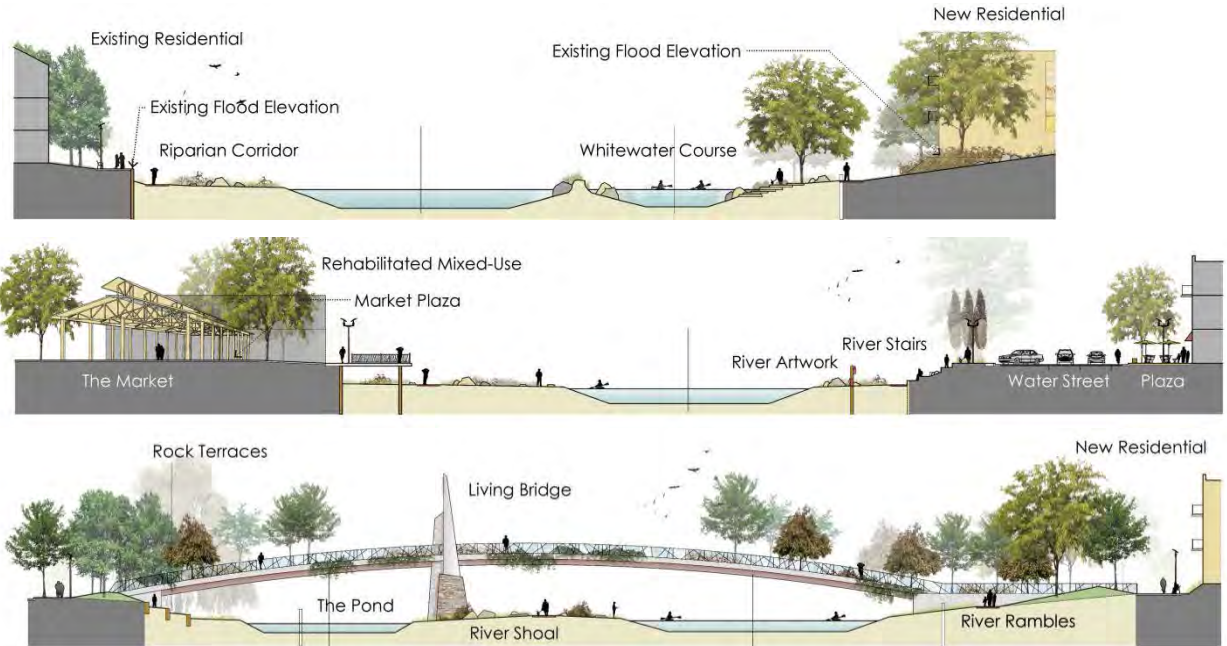
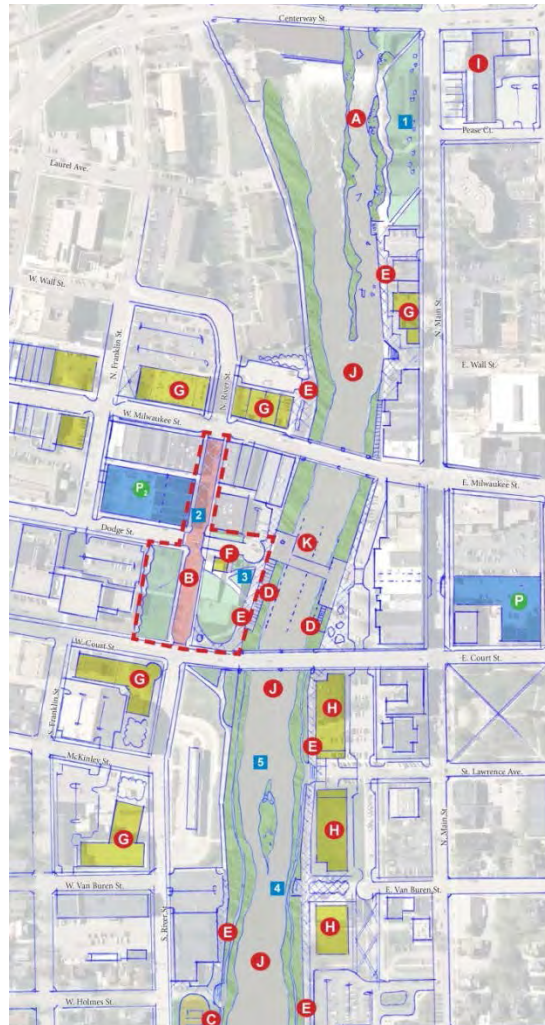


The ARISE plan illustration shows how individual catalyst sites coalesce to form a revitalization plan for the entire Rock Renaissance Area. This simple illustration is the culmination of many hours of public meetings, a guiding vision, and a framework grounded in research and site analysis.

Large-Scale Recommendations

- A EXPAND** Traxler Park to Centerway Street
- B ACTIVATE** the Rock River
- C ENHANCE** and **UNIFY** West Milwaukee Street Retail District
- D CREATE** Main Street Entertainment District
- E DEVELOP** and **BRAND** Town Square
- F EXPAND/COMPLETE** Riverfront Path and Trail Network
- G INCREASE** Housing Options

21st Century River: Naturalization

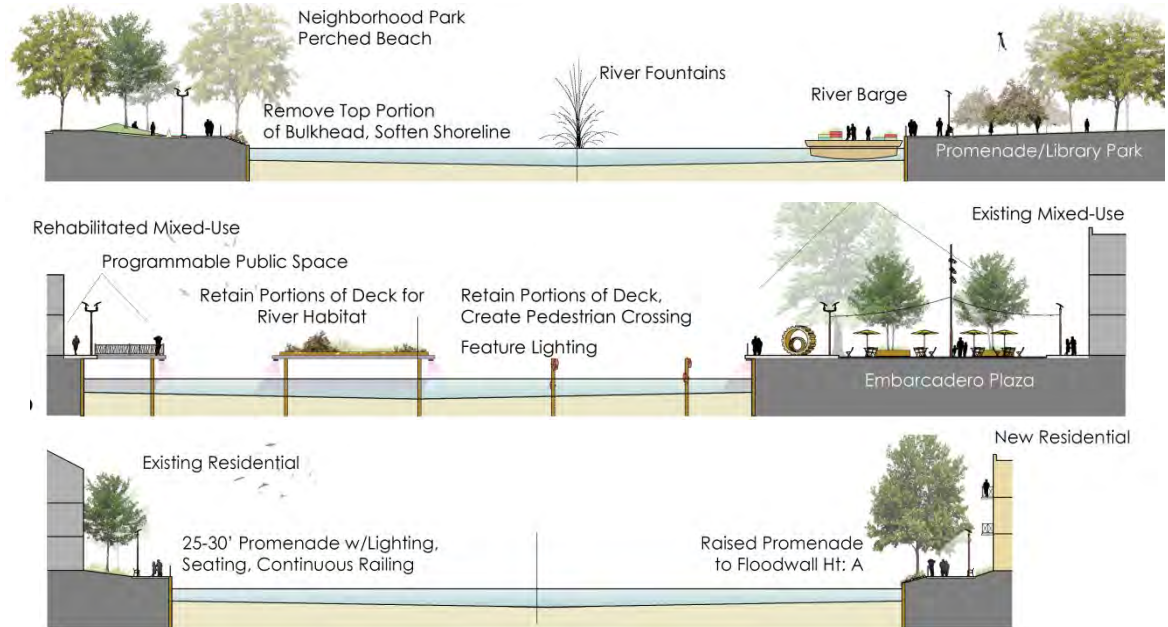
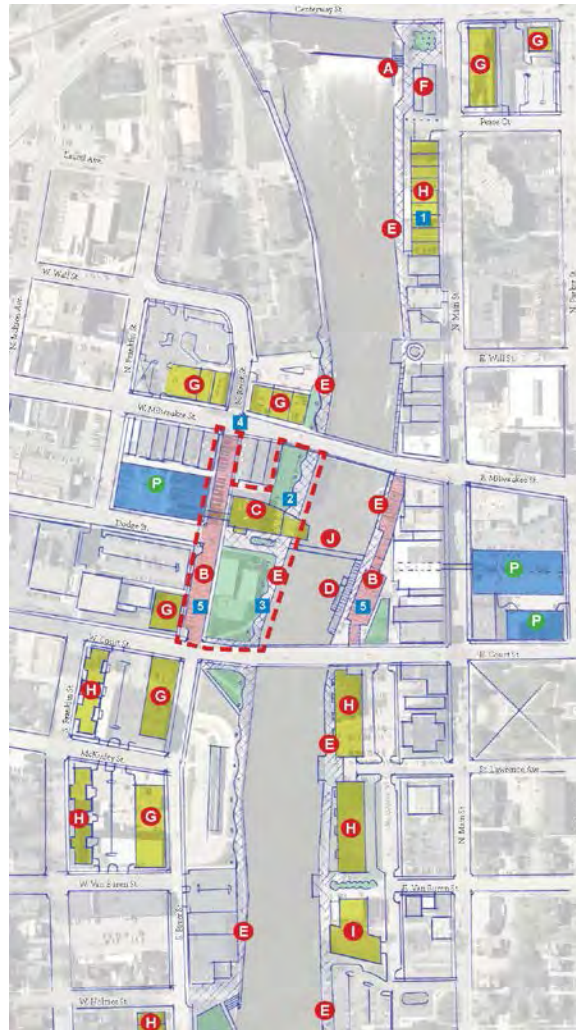


- A White Water Course
- B Festival Street with Town Square
- C Urban Beach
- D River Access
- E Continuous Riverwalk
- F Park Structure
- G Mixed Use Building
- H Residential
- I Relocated Senior Center
- J Naturalized River. Remove Monterey Dam
- K River Plaza
- P Parking Structure
- P₂ Parking Structure with Retail Spaces

The Rock River is the heart of ARISE. The team explored options for its activation that included removing the dam south of downtown and naturalizing the river's edges. This concept would weave people and ecosystems together into a ribbon of green space that winds through downtown Janesville.

21st Century River: Urbanization

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- A Fish Ladder
- B Festival Street with Town Square
- C Signature Civic Building
- D Floating Dock
- E Continuous Riverwalk
- F Park Structure
- G Mixed Use Building
- H Residential
- I Senior Center
- J Pedestrian Bridge
- P Parking Structure

Urbanization of the Rock River's edges would prioritize activation of public space while still leaving room for pockets of ecological productivity. Feedback from the client and the public suggested that this was the preferred focus for the downtown's center.

Downtown Revitalization

- A** Marvin Roth Pavilion
- B** Festival Street
- C** Signature Civic Building
- D** Adaptive Reuse Civic Building
- E** Continuous Riverwalk
- F** Cantilevered Riverwalk
- G** Mixed Use Building
- G1** Premier Mixed Use Building
- H** Residential
- I** Janesville Riverfront Amphitheater
- J** Pedestrian Bridge
- K** River Access
- L** River Stairs
- M** Urban Beach
- N** Main Street Improvements
- O** Bridge Improvements
- P** Parking Structure
- Q** Ramp to Eliminate Stairs
- R** Two-Way Conversion and Street Improvements
- S** Potential Private Improvements
- Catalyst Site Boundary
- Town Square Boundary



The southern half of the project area focuses on revitalization of the downtown core. This reorganization of the downtown will be accomplished through a mix of public projects to create open space along the Rock River and private investment in the rejuvenation of existing buildings and creation of new mixed-use and residential developments.

Town Square



NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

- 1 Town Square
- 2 Main street parking lot expansion
- 3 Dodge Street with parking
- 4 Potential private improvement of existing buildings
- 5 Milwaukee Street Bridge
- 6 Conversion to 2-way street

LONG-TERM ACTIONS

- I Civic building
- II Proposed buildings
- III Festival street
- IV Proposed parking ramp with retail on River St.
- V Replaced surface parking lot with parking ramp



The Town Square is the central focus of the downtown revitalization area. This site will center on the present-day location of a large parking deck that straddles the Rock River. The Town Square will replace the deck with gathering spaces intended to transform the downtown into a destination that celebrates the Rock River as its focal point.

Riverfront Living



NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

- 1 New housing at Old Jail Site
- 2 Riverwalk Extension
- 3 Potential Private Improvements of Existing Buildings

LONG-TERM ACTIONS

- i Adaptive Reuse Civic Building
- ii Housing



Janesville's revitalization offers an opportunity to promote a system of riverfront walkways and spur new development. The market study for downtown Janesville illustrated the City's need for upper-end downtown residential buildings. ARISE proposes a mix of new multi-family residential developments and private improvements that support the entertainment district planned for the east bank of the Rock River.

Mixed-Use Infill Development



NEAR-TERM

- 1 Premiere Mixed-Use Development
- 2 Street Re-Striping
- 3 Potential Private Improvements of existing Buildings

LONG-TERM

- i Mixed-Use Building
- ii Widen Existing Riverwalk



LONG-TERM ACTIONS

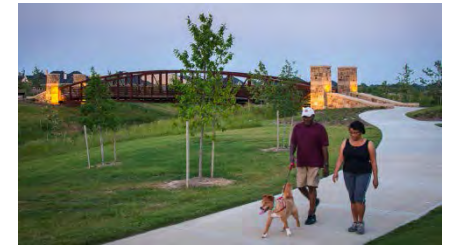
- i Mixed-Use Building
- ii Housing



Redevelopment of multiple sites with the Rock Revitalization Area focuses on the creation of new development on brownfield sites that today are largely privately owned. Potential uses include mixed-use development and the possibility of a two-block campus with convenient access to both the Town Square and transit center.

Open Space

- A** Continuous Riverwalk
- B** Floating Boardwalk
- C** Kayak Launch
- D** Transient Marina
- E** Restrooms
- F** Realigned Highway 51
- G** Mixed Use Building
- H** New Park Entrance
- I** Downtown Entrance
- J** Lagoon Outlet
- K** Adaptive Reuse
- L** Ice House Reuse
- M** Uplighted Railroad Bridge
- N** White Water Course Run
- O** Main Street Improvements
- Catalyst Site Boundary



The northern half of the ARISE strategy focuses on the creation of a festival ground to anchor the north side of downtown to the Town center. It complements Traxler Park with additional performance space, a kayak launch, transit marina and a potential whitewater kayak course.

This portion of the project also realigns North Main Street to create a strong sense of arrival for visitors entering Janesville.

Festival Ground



NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

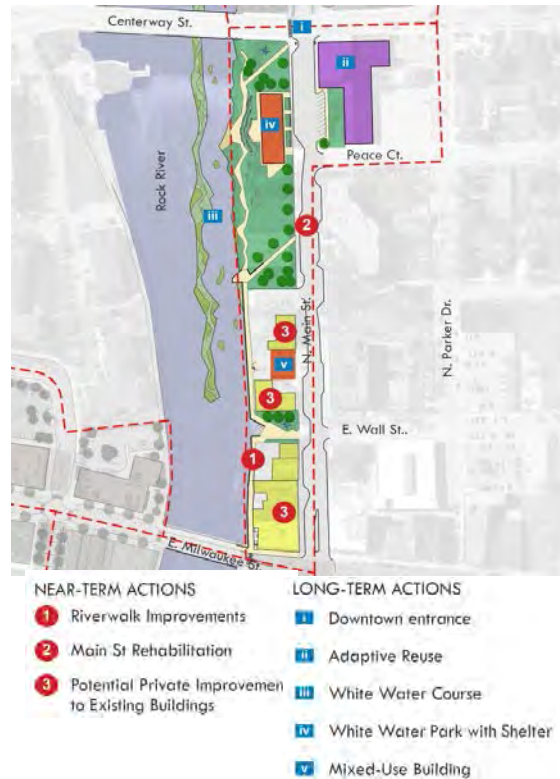
- ### 1 Riverwalk Extension

LONG-TERM ACTIONS

- I** Traxler park Expansion
- II** Kayak Launch
- III** Transient Marina
- IV** Restrooms
- V** Realigned Highway 51
- VI** Mixed-Use Building
- VII** New Park Entrance
- VIII** Lagoon Outlet
- IX** Ice House Reuse
- X** Uplighted Railroad Bridge
- XI** Riverwalk Extension
- XII** Realigned Main Street

The expansion of Traxler Park has the opportunity to become a major destination. This new festival ground builds on the existing park's success and gives it space to attract new large events to the downtown. The realignment of highway 51 improves traffic flow and provides a gateway with views of open space and the river. The park also provides space for flood storage that will help protect the downtown riverbanks from flood damage.

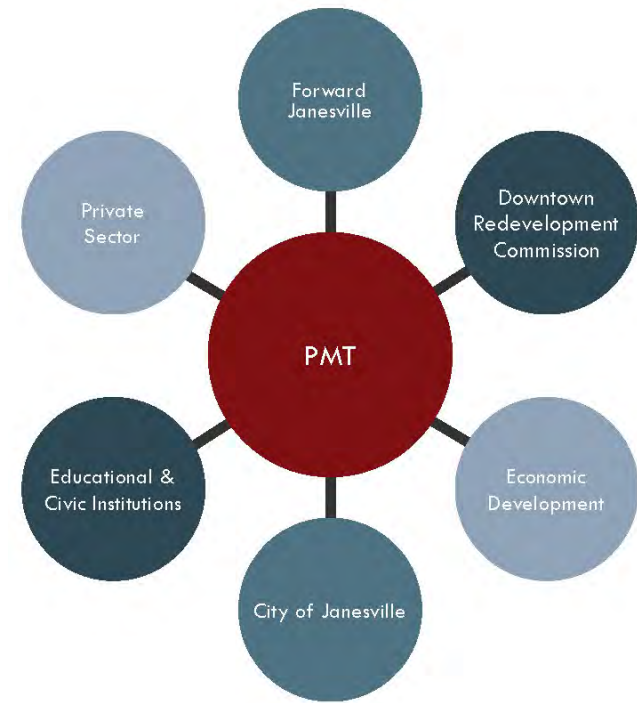
Activated Riverfront



The riverfront north of Milwaukee Street provides an exciting opportunity to turn the Rock River into a recreational and ecological asset. The river is currently rendered inaccessible by steep walls, and dams at the north and south end of downtown Janesville. ARISE proposes that entire sections of river wall be removed to create a naturalized bank that allows easy access and open views to the river. The proposed whitewater course at the site of an existing dam provides the most dramatic example of a revitalized and activated riverbank.

Implementation

CATALYST SITE 3				
Project	Description	Action Steps	Time Frame	Funding
Riverwalk Extension to Traxler Park Preliminary Cost \$500,000* *Not including boardwalk, land acquisition and easements	Extend eastside downtown riverwalk to Traxler Park. Develop a near-term trail system that offers a functional short-term alignment which works with existing land uses. Led by Planning & Public Works	Conduct a riverwalk feasibility study to determine the best trail alignment and estimate construction costs	2014 (Completed)	CIP, TIF, WisDOT TAP Program, DNR
		Complete a NR 716 Site Investigation and remedial option evaluations for the old Adam's Roofing property	2015	
		Prepare a preliminary phase 1 design plan for the trail system which will confirm project scope, schedule, costs and funding.	2015	
		Coordinate with Ice House property owners to establish a trail connection easement to Traxler Park	2015	
		Apply for project grants	2016	
		Prepare final construction plans and request project permits	2016-2017	
		Begin construction	2018	
Redevelopment Facilitation	Look for real estate opportunities related to long-term public improvements related to Catalyst Site 3 Led by Planning	Be involved on Traxler Park's master planning effort to insure continuity with ARISE	2015 onward	
		Meet with WisDOT to discuss the city's interest in relocating Highway 51	2016 onward	
		Initiate discussions with property owners regarding acquisition or easements	2015 onward	
		Stay aware of opportunities for property acquisition	2015 onward	



ARISE intends to succeed where traditional planning documents fail by providing clear prioritization of tasks, parties responsible for their implementation, sources of funding, and a timeline for success. Limitations on budget and time necessitate the development of a clear prioritization hierarchy which targets action steps to be taken in the near-term (next five years) and sets up a basic road map for achieving long-term goals. The strategy also encouraged the creation of a project management team (PMT) which includes the landscape architect as the focus of a policy strategy designed to unite downtown stakeholders and keep revitalization efforts focused on the ARISE vision and strategy.

Catalyst for Change



Just like each individual brownfield site in the Rock Renaissance Area is designed to become a catalyst for change in its community, ARISE will become a catalyst that jump starts further design and planning throughout Janesville.

- The central focus was always to target actions that could quickly help existing sites come together and form a vein of activity that runs through downtown Janesville.
- This strategy was not intended serve as a static picture of the future, but rather as a vision that would drive Janesville's city officials, planners, developers, and citizens to keep moving forward toward a revitalized downtown.
- When details change, the vision laid out by ARISE will provide a core set of principles to guide decision-makers toward an outcome that prioritizes walkable streets, recreational amenities, revitalization of downtown, and celebration of the Rock River. Development projects that serve these goals will over time build on each other to reinvent Janesville's downtown.