



**TWO
RIVERS**
WISCONSIN

2020 IN REVIEW: STATE OF THE CITY JANUARY 18, 2021



Sunrise at Neshotah Beach



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This State of the City Report was prepared by the City Manager, following City Council review of 2020 accomplishments relative to the City's 2020 Goals and Objectives, adopted by the City Council on June 1, 2020.

A complete listing of the 2020 Goals and Objectives can be found on the City's website, www.two-rivers.org.



Catamarans off Neshotah Beach, August 2020



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2020 IN REVIEW: STATE OF THE CITY

This report is dedicated to the memory of Council Member and City Council President Patrick Gagnon, who served on Council from April 2015 until his passing on February 15, 2020.





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2020 IN REVIEW: STATE OF THE CITY

1. Focus relentlessly on new fiscal revenue streams and operational sustainability

- A. Encourage and facilitate projects that will increase City tax base—both new construction and increase in market value of existing properties.



Riverside Foods Expansion: \$7.5 million project, 30 new jobs, completed Fall 2020.

City assisted with \$400,000 TID 8 grant, \$300,000 economic development loan.



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New Cobblestone Hotel: \$6.3 million investment in a formerly blighted block on the downtown waterfront; 55 new hotel rooms; opened August 2020.

City assisted this project with site acquisition, \$750,000 TIF grant, \$250,000 grant from the WI Economic Development Corp.



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Average assessed value for current homes in the Sandy Bay Subdivision is \$233,000

Sandy Bay Highlands: Phase 2 infrastructure for this City-developed conservation subdivision was completed in 2020; five lots were sold, five new homes planned for 2021 construction.



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Washington Highlands Redevelopment: Starting late in 2020, three new duplex condos under construction on the former Washington High School Site. Should add \$1.5 million in new tax base. Aided by TID No. 8.



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Increasing Home Values: After declining 15 percent from 2009 to 2018, the values of existing homes in Two Rivers increased by 5 percent in 2019 and 4 percent in 2020. That trend appears to be continuing into 2021.



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A. Encourage and facilitate projects that will increase City tax base—both new construction and increase in market value of existing properties.



Assisted by the new part-time Communications Coordinator, the City's Community Development Director has created marketing materials for priority redevelopment sites in the City, both City-owned and privately owned

(Left: Information on City-owned former Eggers East property)



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SMALL BUSINESS COVID-19 RELIEF FUND



KEEP
CALM
AND
CARRY
OUT

COVID: Assisting Small Business

In the Spring of 2020, the City joined with the Chamber of Manitowoc County and the City of Manitowoc to fund direct grants to small businesses impacted by the pandemic. \$100,000 in funding for grants came from cuts to the City's operating budget.



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2020 IN REVIEW: STATE OF THE CITY

1. Focus relentlessly on new fiscal revenue streams and operational sustainability

B. Strengthen City Finances



Increase the General Fund's Unrestricted Fund Balance. The City set a 2020 goal to improve the unrestricted fund balance, by at least \$180,000 annually (ultimate goal: \$2 million). That goal will be reached through annual operating results that are either balanced or generate a surplus, and by reducing/eliminating deficit balances in other funds, which impact the liquidity of the General Fund balance. (continued)



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1. Focus relentlessly on new fiscal revenue streams and operational sustainability

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Increase the General Fund's Unrestricted Fund Balance (continued)

2020 year-end projections for the General Fund indicate an operating surplus (revenues minus expenditures) of at least \$200,000

- City made effective use of Federal funding thru WI's Routes to Recovery program to cover extraordinary expenses incurred due to COVID.
- 2021 adopted budget continues spending constraint; up only 0.52% over 2020, 10% over a decade ago. (continued)



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B. Strengthen City Finances



Increase the General Fund's Unrestricted Fund Balance (continued)

- Reducing negative cash balances in the water and sewer utilities, in TID No. 6 and in several other funds improved the General Fund's unrestricted fund balance by more than \$1 million between 12.31.2019 and 12.31.2020.
- This has been accomplished through short-term inter-fund loans from other City funds with surplus balances to those with negative balances, and through improved operating results for the utility funds.



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B. Strengthen City Finances



Increase the General Fund's Unrestricted Fund Balance (continued)

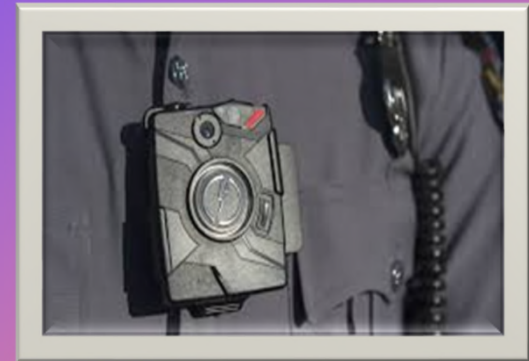
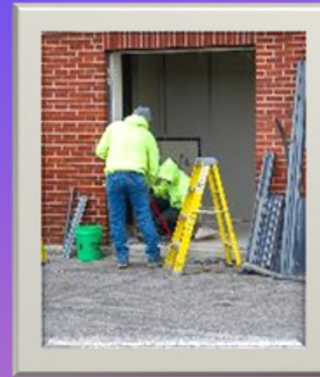
- Water Utility deficit balance, which had grown to \$1.9 million at 2019 year-end, is projected to be reduced by more than \$800,000 in 2020: \$500,000 attributable to a five-year loan from TID 7; over \$300,000 from 2020 operations.
- Sewer Utility deficit balance of \$151,500 at the end of 2019 was eliminated as the result of 2020 operations.
- Electric Utility negative balance of \$90,000 at the end of 2019 grew slightly in 2020, due mostly to the PSC's extended moratorium on utility shutoffs, due to COVID
- Even while making significant progress in reducing/eliminating these deficits, the City continues to invest in water and sewer infrastructure



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2. Deliver Outstanding City Services and Innovations for Both Sustainability and to Support Future Growth



Examples of Technology, Clockwise From Upper Left:

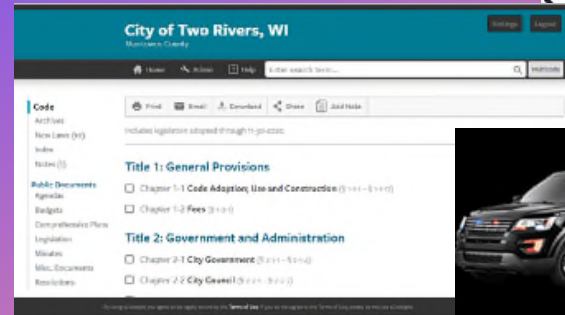
- New drive-up window at library enhances service delivery
- TRPD has implemented its 3rd generation of body cameras, while many larger PD's are just adopting the technology
- Over 90 percent of streetlights are now LED; reducing street lighting costs by 30 percent from 2017
- Ongoing process optimization study at water filtration plant, to minimize chemical use, optimize lead control in the distribution system



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Other 2020 innovations have included:

- Starting to implement Granicus “Peak” software for public meeting agendas, minutes and livestreaming
- Recodification through General Code Corporation, providing a current, searchable, on-line version of City Ordinances
- Cost-effective modernizing of the City’s small vehicle fleet, through Enterprise Fleet Management (approved with 2021 Budget)



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3. Drive Strategic Community Development

During 2020, the City has:

- Created TID No. 13, to provide incentives for redevelopment of the north end of the downtown. Impetus for creating this tax incremental district was to assist a Culver's proposed for the SW corner of 22nd and Washington. While that development did not proceed, the TID is now a tool available to aid redevelopment in that area.
- Begun the process for amending the boundaries and project plan for TID 12, to assist a \$3 million redevelopment project at 12th and Washington Streets (former M&M Lunch and an adjacent property), planned for 2021.
- Developed new marketing materials for priority redevelopment sites around the city.
- Engaged with developers interested in several of those priority sites.
- Adopted a 2021 Budget that includes \$20,000 to supplement Two Rivers Main Street Program funding for grants to businesses to assist with new business startups and façade/sign work.
- Begun updating the 2010 Comprehensive Land Use Plan; a new Comprehensive Plan to be adopted by the end of 2021, will help further guide future development and redevelopment activities.



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2020 IN REVIEW: STATE OF THE CITY

3. Drive Strategic Community Development

The City also salutes other local businesses who have invested in Two Rivers in 2020 without any direct City assistance. Thank you for investing in Two Rivers!



September 2020: Eggers Division of VT Industries
Announces Plans to Add 50 new jobs over the next 6-9
months



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Hartman's Bakery—
Washington Street



Tantrum Audio—Memorial Drive



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Christina's Cakery and Baked Goods—Madison Street



Two Rivers Family Dental—23rd Street



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Advanced Family Chiropractic—
Washington Street



Linda Loves Cheesecake—
Washington Street



Renee's Chocolates and Popcorn—Memorial Drive



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2020 IN REVIEW: STATE OF THE CITY

3. Drive Strategic Community Development

Strategic Community Development also means investment in critical infrastructure, leveraging available funding from non-City sources to maximize such investment



Planned 2020 street reconstruction projects were deferred to 2021 due to COVID concerns. Reconstruction of portions of Madison, 24th and 25th Street is planned for 2021. The \$4.25 million project will include replacement of all underground utilities, including water and sewer laterals. Funding includes \$850,000 in grant funding and \$1.2 million from TID No. 8, leaving about 52% of project costs to be funded from tax and utility-supported debt.



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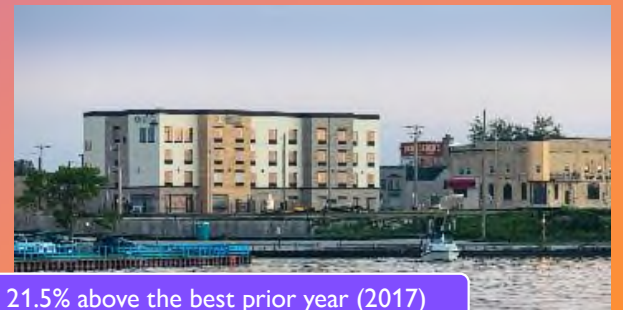
2020 IN REVIEW: STATE OF THE CITY

4. Continue to Grow a Vibrant, Sustainable, Safe and Connected Community, While Respecting Our Traditions and History to Attract New Residents, Visitors and Businesses

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was a very good year for tourism in Two Rivers. The availability of plenty of outdoor activities was a major draw for visitors.



Room tax revenues ran at a record pace throughout the year and were further enhanced by the opening of a new hotel in August.



2020 room tax revenue totaled \$143,287, 21.5% above the best prior year (2017)

Photos courtesy of Manitowoc Area Visitor & Convention Bureau



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2020 IN REVIEW: STATE OF THE CITY

4. Continue to Grow a Vibrant, Sustainable, Safe and Connected Community, While Respecting Our Traditions and History to Attract New Residents, Visitors and Businesses

Neshotah Beach, BEST BEACH IN WISCONSIN, continued its star role as TR's calling card. Visitors were able to socially distance as they saw fit, in the cool Lake Michigan breezes.



The beach was very busy in 2020, despite record high Lake Michigan water levels. Concerts at the Rotary Pavilion were a weekend draw, as were Movies on the Beach. A new concession operator, Ice Clouds, proved to be a hit. The Catamaran Assoc. of WI came to visit, with a July regatta.



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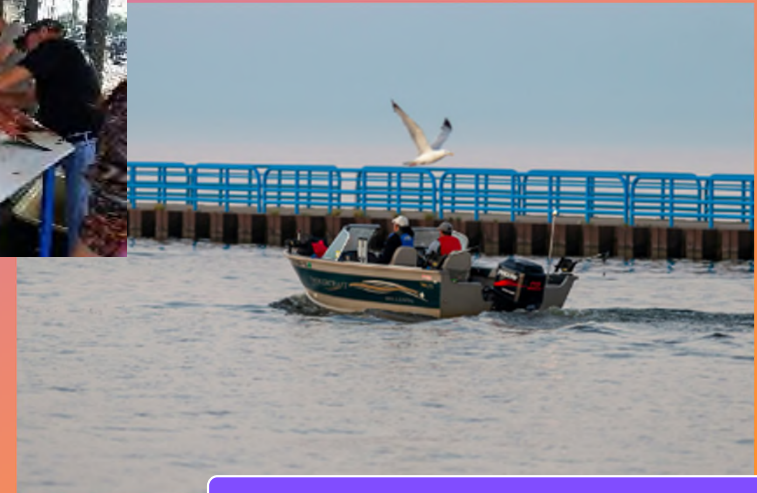
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Great fishing on Lake Michigan continues to draw visitors to Two Rivers, for charters or to launch your own boat and head out on the big lake.



2020 launch ramp fee collections totaled \$10,094, twice the revenue of recent years



Photos courtesy of Manitowoc Area Visitor & Convention Bureau and Seagull Marina



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2020 IN REVIEW: STATE OF THE CITY

4. Continue to Grow a Vibrant, Sustainable, Safe and Connected Community, While Respecting Our Traditions and History to Attract New Residents, Visitors and Businesses

The City continued to make quality of life investments in 2020, and has more planned for 2021.



2020 projects included completion of the South Breakwater Trail off Mariners Trail, resurfacing about a mile of Mariners Trail with funding assistance from WDNR and Friends of Mariners Trail, and installing new signage at the Spirit of the Rivers Monument and Wayside. The City completed acquisition of 34 acres of land along the lake side of STH 42 from WisDOT and Manitowoc County, for park and trail use.



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2021 quality of life investments include planning for a new splash pad/ice skating rink (planning committee appointed in December 2020), playground improvements at City parks, more trail resurfacing on Mariners Trail, and a trail project to connect the Washington Street bridge with Jefferson, along East River. The City's Park and Open Space Plan will also be updated.



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5. Encourage Employees' Personal and Professional Development, Invest in Employees to Deliver the Highest Quality Services for Our Community Today and Tomorrow, While Being a Preferred City for Career Opportunities



Department Head retirements in 2020/early 2021 included Electric Utility Director Ken Kozak, Police Chief Joe Collins and City Clerk/HR Director Kim Graves



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5. Encourage Employees' Personal and Professional Development, Invest in Employees to Deliver the Highest Quality Services for Our Community Today and Tomorrow, While Being a Preferred City for Career Opportunities



Upon Chief Joe Collins' retirement in February 2020, Assistant Chief Brian Kohlmeier was appointed Chief of Police. Chief Kohlmeier is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and a 29-year veteran of the department.

Through an internal promotion process, Lt. Ben Meinnert was promoted to Assistant Chief, effective May 2020.



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New Department Heads appointed in 2020 include:

- Parks and Recreation Director Terri Vosters, July 2020
- City Clerk/HR Director Jamie Jackson, December 2020
- Electric Utility Director Brian Delleman, December 2020



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6. Enhance and Promote the City's Identity and Brand Story Throughout the Region

August 2020 marked the culmination of an 18-month community branding project, funded from Community Development monies and spearheaded by a citizen Committee on Branding and Marketing. Branding consultant Civic Brand of Richardson, TX, a firm with impressive credentials in community branding, guided a process that gathered community input through surveys, public workshops and in-person meetings during several visits to Two Rivers.



**COMMUNITY
BRANDING
THAT ATTRACTS
TALENT,
TOURISM
& INVESTMENT**



CivicBrand



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2020 IN REVIEW: STATE OF THE CITY

6. Enhance and Promote the City's Identity and Brand Story Throughout the Region

Two Rivers' BRAND PRINCIPLES were identified as:

- Timeless
- Creative and Entrepreneurial
- Comfortable

Timeless

When you're in Two Rivers, a sense of timelessness surrounds you. We're a quaint small town that gives off a feeling that transcends generations, and it's reflected in our architecture, in our values, in the way a friendly neighbor greets you on Washington Street. Even new things we do are done in a timeless way.

Creative and Entrepreneurial

In our early history there were countless entrepreneurs who came up with creative solutions to problems. From fishermen to industry leaders, people weren't afraid to strike out on their own in the pursuit of something better. There's now an opportunity to reclaim this spirit in a way that feels right for a new era of Two Rivers.

Comfortable

There's a comfort to your time here — many of us don't even lock our front doors. Our goal is to make you feel at home. We want Two Rivers to be a place where you can relax, let go and be yourself.

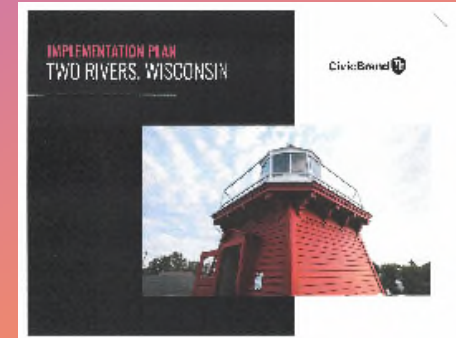


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Two Rivers' branding story, including the brand principles and a new logo, were introduced to the community at "Celebrate Two Rivers," an event featuring live music, food trucks, fireworks and a premiere showing of the community branding video, held at Walsh Field. Several hundred people enjoyed this event; the second annual "Celebrate Two Rivers" is planned for August 2021.



Far from over, Two Rivers community branding efforts in many ways have just begun. The City Council by ordinance approved in December 2020 made Branding and Marketing a permanent City committee; implementation will move forward in 2021, utilizing guidelines and a 78-page implementation strategy.



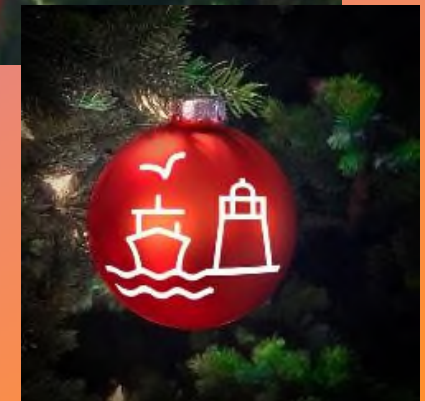
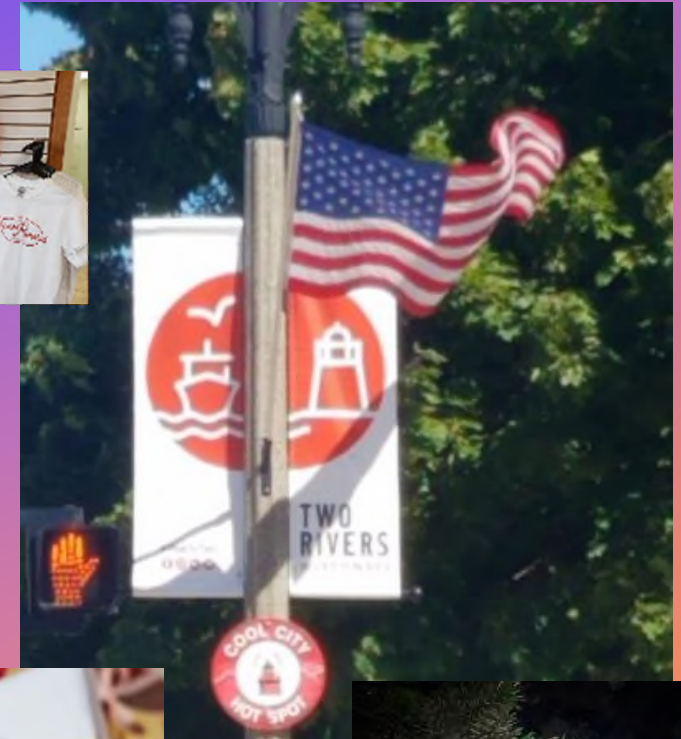
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Implementation of the Two Rivers brand has included sales of logowear, featuring the new city logo on downtown banners, and the rollout of a “Made in Two Rivers” campaign.

Two Rivers Brand Ambassadors—community volunteers—are getting the word about “Made in Two Rivers” out to local businesses.





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An early project of the Branding Committee was development of a website devoted to

Two Rivers events & attractions: [EXPLORETWORIVERS.COM](https://www.exploretworivers.com)

This site is intended to be the most comprehensive, up-to-date site for information on all of the great things happening in Two Rivers—for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. First launched in Fall 2019, the site has been vastly improved in 2020, and is a major tool in the City's branding/marketing.

EXPLORE
TWO RIVERS
.COM





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2020 IN REVIEW: STATE OF THE CITY

Fireworks Celebrate Two Rivers





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