To: City Council

Re: CIP allocations

6/9/2025

Dear Councilmembers,

The Northside Hill Neighborhood Association steering committee discussed various projects and would like to request budget allocations for the following items, in order of priority:

**#1 – Division & Germania Crosswalk Safety Improvements**

This intersection was identified in our neighborhood plan as our #1 priority due to life-threatening safety issues. Two of our steering committee members were nearly injured from cars not yielding to pedestrians in the crosswalk, which follows the ascent up the Madison St. hill.

It falls outside the scope of the 2025 Birch St project, and is unclear if money has been budgeted for this crosswalk. However, it appears item 441-012: Transportation - Solar Powered Signage may cover it.

Justifications:

2. Provide safe, functional, and accessible infrastructure and services that are environmentally sensitive & sustainable.

4. Develop, nurture, and revitalize safe, healthy, and connected neighborhoods.

5. Facilitate an engaged community.

**#2 – Mt. Simon Upper/Lower Pedestrian Access**

Recently the Parks Department asked us for opinions on how to spend a $300k donation, and the committee recommended to prioritize upper Mt. Simon with playground equipment replacement, and the construction of a shelter. This based on polling showing those as the top preferences.

We asked Parks to create a comprehensive plan for the playground area at Upper Mt. Simon that includes pedestrian access to lower.

We asked this plan to include safe pedestrian access, even if it exceeded the available $300k donation. Safe pedestrian access to lower Mt. Simon was identified in our 2023 Neighborhood Plan, after concerns were raised about Addison Ave and cars taking a blind corner.

Since redoing Addison is apparently cost-prohibitive, we thought a stairway between upper & lower Mt. Simon would be worth investigating and budgeting for. The location could be at any number of points.

We request that the Parks department:

1. Identify feasibility & optimal location, and estimate cost
2. Integrate this plan as part of the playground/shelter construction, and approve
3. Budget for at least part of this in the next 5 years

The neighborhood association in turn is willing to:

1. Fundraise part of the cost
2. Apply to corporate & foundation giving programs to help cover costs

Such a staircase could make a unified upper & lower Mt. Simon safely accessible to pedestrians, and significantly reduce the walking time to go from one to the other. The park would be enhanced overall.

Justifications:

2. Provide safe, functional, and accessible infrastructure and services that are environmentally sensitive & sustainable.

4. Develop, nurture, and revitalize safe, healthy, and connected neighborhoods.

6. Create engaging opportunities to make Eau Claire livable, lovable, and fun.

5. Facilitate an engaged community.

**#3 – Northside Hill Community Garden**

The committee expressed interest in starting a community garden. We have considered multiple locations, including a private lot on Bellevue Ave that will be available for sale to us in late 2027, the public area immediately east of the McDonough Pickleball courts, and the public patch of land at North Eddy St & Gleason.

Currently the association does not have enough active interest in a garden to immediately implement one. That may change in the near/far future. It could be helpful if council allocated some money for this, with the association willing to contribute to costs as well (through fundraising, grants, and corporate giving). Such a line item could generate renewed interest. If sufficient interest does not materialize, it would be appropriate to remove from the CIP in future years.

Justifications:

1. Support economic prosperity for all with diverse, creative economic development, and inclusive housing options.

2. Provide safe, functional, and accessible infrastructure and services that are environmentally sensitive & sustainable.

4. Develop, nurture, and revitalize safe, healthy, and connected neighborhoods.

5. Facilitate an engaged community.

6. Create engaging opportunities to make Eau Claire livable, lovable, and fun.

7. Nurture community-wide opportunities for personal learning, growth, and development.

Thank you for your consideration of our neighborhood during your budget discussions. We look forward to continued partnership with the city in improving the Northside Hill community.

Sincerely,

Andrew Niese

President, Northside Hill Neighborhood Association

On behalf of the Steering Committee