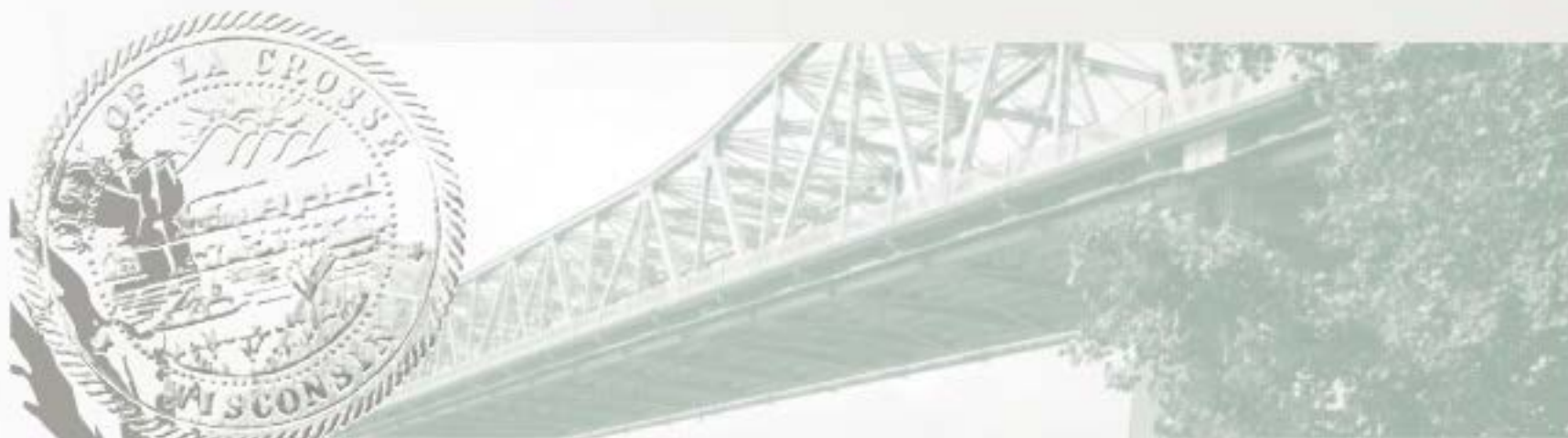


Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Plan Elements
December 19, 2002

Confluence: the La Crosse Comprehensive Plan

Plan Elements Contents

- Tab 1 Introduction and Plan Summary**
- Tab 2 Summary of Conditions and Issues**
- Tab 3 Natural Resources**
- Tab 4 Land Use**
- Tab 5 Transportation**
- Tab 6 Urban Design**
- Tab 7 Parks, Recreation and Open Space**
- Tab 8 Neighborhoods and Housing**
- Tab 9 Public Utilities**
- Tab 10 Community Facilities**
- Tab 11 Economic Development**
- Tab 12 Heritage Preservation**
- Tab 13 Intergovernmental Coordination**
- Tab 14 Plan Implementation**

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Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

1.0 Introduction and Plan Summary Plan Element

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 1

PURPOSE OF CONFLUENCE 1

WHAT IS SMART GROWTH? 2

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE 2

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT 3

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE 3

HOW HAS THIS PLAN RESPONDED? 4

WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED FROM THIS PLANNING PROCESS? 4

HOW CAN THIS PLAN BE USED EFFECTIVELY? 4

WHERE DOES THE CITY GO FROM HERE? 4

PLAN SUMMARY 5

CONDITIONS AND ISSUES REPORT 5

ALTERNATIVES AND CONCEPT PLAN 6

 Growth Alternatives 6

 The Concept Plan 7

PLAN ELEMENTS 9

 Natural Resources Plan 9

 Land Use Plan 10

 Transportation Plan 10

 Urban Design Plan 11

 Parks and Open Space Plan 12

 Neighborhoods and Housing Plan 12

 Public Utilities Plan 13

 Community Facilities Plan 14

 Economic Development Plan 15

 Heritage Preservation Plan 15

 Intergovernmental Coordination Plan 16

 Plan Implementation 17

List of Tables

Table 1-1: Forecast Growth in Population, Employment and Land Development,
2000 to 2020 6

Appendices

Appendix A List of Acronyms

Introduction and Summary

This section summarizes *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan*, provides an overview of the document and describes how the plan was prepared. But first, to avoid confusion, the meaning of commonly repeated terms and phrases should be as follows:

- The term “the City” means the City of La Crosse, both as a geographical place and as a governmental entity.
- The term “*Confluence*” is the common abbreviation of the phrase “*Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan*” and refers collectively to all the documents and elements that comprise the entire comprehensive plan.

Introduction

Purpose of Confluence

While one of the purposes of *Confluence* is to fulfill the requirements of Wisconsin “Smart Growth” legislation, its more fundamental purpose is to serve the City and the community by:

- Establishing a long-term strategy for the growth of the City
- Providing a framework to aid decision-making about a variety of subjects involving public expenditures and infrastructure improvements
- Serving as a reference for development application reviews
- Establishing a foundation for zoning ordinance and map amendments
- Guiding the preparation of the multi-year capital budget
- Providing a basis for intergovernmental coordination
- Fostering communication to and leadership for the private sector development proposals



What is Smart Growth?

“Smart growth,” the guiding principle of this plan, aims to accommodate development while protecting key resources, use land more efficiently, promote housing choice, reduce driving and promote walking bicycling and transit ridership. “Smart growth” also encourages cooperative working relationships among neighboring municipalities and various levels of government. A basic tenant of smart growth is that coordinated planning, across jurisdictional boundaries, can lead to more desirable development patterns and more efficient and effective delivery of public services.

Document Structure

Confluence is composed of three documents:

Analysis of Conditions and Identification of Issues Report. This report describes current conditions, past or current planning efforts, opportunities and major issues to be resolved relative to each of twelve plan element subjects (e.g., land use, transportation). It consists of a series of separate reports or chapters (Chapter 2 through Chapter 16).

Alternatives and Concept Plan. While these were prepared as two separate documents, they are integrally related and meant to function as one. Together they present and analyze three alternative, generalized growth scenarios for La Crosse and recommend a hybrid conceptual plan. The Concept Plan establishes the overarching goals and development framework that serves as the basis for the objectives and actions outlined in the plan elements.

Plan Elements. Separate plan elements were prepared for each of the required subject areas listed below (Chapter 3 through Chapter 14). Each plan element includes objectives, actions, maps and implementation priorities responding to the issues identified, in light of the framework and goals set forth in the Concept Plan. The plan elements combined with the conditions and issues chapters cover the information the State requires to be in a “Smart Growth” plan.

- Natural resources
- Land use
- Transportation
- Urban design
- Neighborhoods and housing
- Parks, recreation and open space
- Public utilities
- Community facilities
- Economic development
- Heritage preservation
- Intergovernmental coordination
- Implementation

Public Involvement

Confluence was prepared with significant involvement by citizens and elected or appointed City officials using these means:

- A 26-member citizens advisory committee appointed by the Common Council
- Major community “open houses” (VisionFest, PlanFest, and a transportation open house) in which the public could view maps, review conditions and recommendations, provide comments, listen to presentations and talk with members of the citizens advisory committee.
- Interviews with key stakeholders in the community
- Presentations to civic organizations by City staff
- News and opinion articles in the *La Crosse Tribune*
- Three newsletters mailed to every household in the city
- Local television coverage
- An internet web page
- A public opinion survey
- An abbreviated Visual Preference Survey regarding urban design

The Initial Challenge

When La Crosse set out to update its comprehensive plan, community leaders set as their challenge to build on the City’s assets to maintain, and in some cases improve, the quality of the community. La Crosse is graced with significant natural amenities, strong traditional neighborhoods, high quality institutions and a strong downtown. However, demographic and economic changes, age and physical deterioration, shrinking resources, and insufficient regulatory tools or structure have presented challenges that must be addressed if the City is to retain its role as the business, government, and cultural hub of the Coulee Region.



How has this Plan Responded?

Confluence has responded to the community's challenge by proposing selective refinements and additions to the pattern of land use, improvements to the roadway network, additions to the park, trail and open space systems, aesthetic improvements to neighborhoods as well as major road corridors, and enhanced protection of sensitive natural features. By carefully integrating residential and nonresidential land uses in and around commercial centers, in an environment that encourages walking, bicycling and riding the bus, the City believes that the appearance and convenience of these centers can be improved so that they will enhance the region's livability.

The actions described in *Confluence* focus on sustaining and revitalizing existing assets - traditional residential neighborhoods, high quality schools and institutions, a strong downtown and cultural core, and a stunning natural setting. Perhaps the most important outcome of this process has been the sense that the plan will provide the direction and framework needed to ensure La Crosse remains *the* choice as a great place to live, work and play in the Coulee Region.

What has been Learned from this Planning Process?

Through the process of updating *Confluence*, La Crosse has reinforced what was already known -- that there is wisdom in citizens' understanding of their neighborhoods and the broader community, and that by involving them closely in this process of community building the results can be greatly improved. Community involvement in the planning process has also built a sense of ownership in the plan and created champions who can help shepherd and promote its implementation.

How Can this Plan be Used Effectively?

Confluence should be regarded as the central guiding document for all major physical planning and capital improvement decisions by the City. Officials and staff should refer to its goals, actions and maps on a regular basis, either adhering to them or officially revising the plan as circumstances or priorities change. The central elements of the plan should be consistent and ongoing while the specifics should be amended to best suit community needs at the time. Above all, the plan should be used.

Where Does the City Go from Here?

La Crosse now turns its attention to the future, with a framework to guide the many decisions that lie ahead. Plans like this one are implemented through a series of small and large changes, initiated by both the public and private sectors. In La Crosse, citizen involvement is an integral and welcome part of the planning and community building process. Please join in this ongoing effort to shape the future of La Crosse.

Plan Summary

Following is a summary of the three components of *Confluence* – the Conditions and Issues Report, the Alternatives and Concept Plan, and the Plan Elements.

Conditions and Issues Report

A description and analysis of existing conditions and major issues is presented in Chapters 2-16. Following is a summary of the predominant issues and values expressed by the community:

- **Habitat and Natural Character:** La Crosse residents place a high value on the natural features and character of their community. Given the visual prominence of these features, the natural landscape contributes greatly to the identity of La Crosse. There also appears to be strong support for protecting wildlife habitat and the natural character of the area, through stronger regulatory controls if necessary.
- **Community Appearance:** The historic charm of the City is recognized as an important community asset. However, some areas of the community are showing signs of physical deterioration and poor property maintenance. In addition, inappropriate uses and insensitively designed infill development have negatively impacted the character of some neighborhoods.
- **Redevelopment and Revitalization:** Efforts to redevelop the riverfront have been very well received by the community. Similarly, there appears to be broad community support for neighborhood revitalization activities. It is recognized that building on the City's existing assets, in particular its charming older neighborhoods and architecture and beautiful natural setting, is an effective way to attract and retain residents and businesses.
- **Growth Management:** While there is very little vacant land left inside the City limits for new development, the community favors taking a conservative approach to expand growth into the outlying coulee areas. Priority should be placed on identifying opportunities for redevelopment and infill within the City in order to accommodate new development.
- **Major Institutions:** The community places a high value on the presence of major institutions such as University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L), St. Francis/Viterbo, and Gundersen/Lutheran Medical Center. However, their expansion into surrounding neighborhoods is seen as a threat to the stability and residential scale and character of these neighborhoods.

In addition to identification of key issues, the Conditions and Issues Report presented an analysis of demographic trends and related impacts to land development needs. Following is a summary of those findings.

Table 1-1 : Forecast Growth in Population, Employment and Land Development, 2000 to 2020

Additional Population	3,295
Additional Employment	4,242

General Land Use	Gross Acres Needed
Residential Acres	317
Commercial Acres	98
Industrial Acres	78
Total Acres Needed	493

Average additional acres needed every 5 years	123
--	-----

Alternatives and Concept Plan

Growth Alternatives

In order to create and adopt a concept plan, three general plan scenarios or alternatives were drafted. These scenarios were conceived as “pure” or abstract forms of potential courses of action reflecting different priorities based on the identified issues. The intention in describing “pure” growth scenarios was to promote a debate about the major issues and how they might be resolved in light of different priorities. Consequently, none of them was expected to be selected without modification to guide the development of objectives and specific actions. Instead, one might be generally preferred and some positive aspects of the others incorporated to create the concept plan.

The alternative growth scenarios were defined after studying the fundamental issues and concerns in La Crosse as identified in the first phase of the process. Ideally, the scenarios would also provide a framework in which to debate some of the secondary issues. As noted above, the alternatives were designed to be distinct, understandable and viable.

The three conceptual plan scenarios are summarized as:

- **Neighborhood Revitalization Focus:** Public incentives and actions emphasize rebuilding and improving presently developed locations.
- **Fringe Development Focus:** Public policy and incentives direct most new growth and investment to fringe areas.
- **Environmental and Cultural Focus:** Public policy and incentives value natural and cultural resources above all others.

Detailed descriptions and evaluations of the alternatives are presented in Chapter 16.

The Concept Plan

The Concept Plan evolved from evaluation and debate of the growth alternatives. Achieving consensus on a desired future development pattern for La Crosse was an important step in creating the comprehensive plan. Input received during VisionFest helped clarify community values and priorities, which was used to evaluate the scenarios. The Citizens Advisory Committee initially selected the desirable characteristics among the alternatives that would form the concept plan. Their recommendations were then reviewed and approved by the Common Council.

Goals: The Concept Plan identified the following goals to guide the preparation of the individual plan elements of *Confluence*.

- 1. Compact Growth:** Direct most new development to areas currently served by public utilities and roads, and provide additional infrastructure only when available serviced land in the region has been nearly fully used.
- 2. Neighborhoods:** Improve existing neighborhoods and districts by redeveloping blighted or obsolescent properties, rehabilitating others and filling vacant or underutilized sites.
- 3. Natural Environment:** Safeguard and improve environmental features as a means of promoting neighborhood revitalization, community image and quality of life.
- 4. Municipal Growth:** Capture some portion of future regional growth and expand the municipal tax base but not at the expense of sacrificing neighborhood revitalization or prime natural resources.
- 5. Transportation:** Build a transportation system that provides good, safe access, supports a variety of travel modes, and enhances the appearance and livability of the community.
- 6. Regional Planning:** Encourage the nearby Towns to adopt plans and zoning consistent with the preservation of agriculture, protection of natural resources and cost-efficient urban growth.



Protecting wooded coulee hillsides from development impacts is an important goal

Principles and Priorities: The Concept Plan guided the preparation of the comprehensive plan in the following ways:

- Public incentives and regulations should be used to **direct development to existing neighborhoods and “activity centers.”** Reinvestment needs within La Crosse should be given equal priority with new land development. Existing neighborhoods and activity centers within La Crosse should be the focus for a substantial portion of, but far from all, public investment.
- Public efforts to **encourage housing rehabilitation** should increase, and highly deteriorated or obsolescent housing units should be removed and replaced. Locations of special effort should include the downtown and its fringes, the riverfront, locations near hospitals and colleges, historic commercial nodes, and certain subareas in the older residential neighborhoods.
- In older neighborhoods, **redevelopment should increase densities in certain locations**, especially near bus lines, colleges or medical centers. In select areas, redevelopment may also provide opportunities to create small sites to restore wetlands or woods or to create neighborhood parks or play areas. Redevelopment should be driven and **led by public actions in concert with market forces**.
- La Crosse should take steps to work with property owners in adjacent communities to **extend municipal services and annex nearby fringe areas**. Incentives for annexation should be explored including annexation of locations previously served by City sanitary sewer mains. The City should also **work to change state annexation laws** to give cities greater ability to manage growth in a cost-effective and appealing manner. In addition, La Crosse should **abide by its longstanding policy to not extend water services without annexation** of the land served.
- Residential and commercial land uses should be vertically mixed, and **development should generally become more compact and urban**. New buildings should reflect the character of existing older buildings. Properties contaminated by hazardous materials should be cleaned, and some of them should be retained as open space. There should be greater **diversity in the types of new housing** built, including more new single family homes as well as higher quality townhouses and apartments.
- Special attention should be paid to the **quality of design** of all private or public construction and to the efficient and wise use of land.
- Public policy and spending should be applied to **enhance, restore and protect natural resources** such as the rivers, wetlands, bluffs and wooded hillsides. Likewise, **cultural resources and awareness** should be enhanced, including schools, parks, museums, historic districts or buildings, and other amenities that are felt to enhance quality of life.
- **Surface water management should be emphasized** in La Crosse and adjacent

communities through a development review and management process that encompasses those watersheds. Best management practices (BMPs) should be followed whenever possible.

Plan Elements

Following is a summary of the key recommendations relative to each of the twelve plan elements:

Natural Resources Plan

- Collaborate with other governmental entities in the area to prepare and adopt a Surface Water Management Plan for the entire watershed consistent with Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Storm Water Permit (WPDES) requirements.
- Amend the zoning and subdivision regulations as necessary to incorporate BMPs and consistently enforce these standards.
- Adopt and enforce buffer requirements to protect wetland, riparian, and woodland resources from impacts of development.
- Protect the bluffs through continued acquisition of land and/or easements along the bluff.
- Protect remaining wetlands and identify opportunities to restore degraded wetlands.
- Establish continuous vegetated corridors by planting additional trees and other landscaping along roads and in parks.



Efforts to protect natural resources in La Crosse will involve coordination between the City, State and Federal agencies

Land Use Plan

- Promote compact and contiguous fringe development.
- Revitalize traditional neighborhoods and protect and improve single family housing.
- Foster mixed use and traditional neighborhood design (TND) in appropriate locations.
- Focus redevelopment on the riverfront, in distressed neighborhoods, and at key activity centers.
- Continue downtown and riverfront revitalization through implementation of the *City Vision 2000 Plan Update* and support for development of riverfront parks and open space, housing and offices.
- Support planned hospital and college growth that also protects the character of surrounding neighborhoods.
- Reclaim sites contaminated by pollutants and plan for new land uses there.
- Adopt an entirely new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that incorporates zoning and subdivision regulations and improved design and development standards.



Downtown Building Revitalization

Transportation Plan

- Create a balanced and efficient transportation network that provides viable alternatives to driving and maximizes the use of existing road infrastructure.
- Update the functional classification system to ensure an efficient balance between mobility and land access is maintained.

- Improve roadway design through streetscape enhancements and design standards that encourage:
 - Interconnections
 - Narrower widths and traffic calming where feasible and appropriate to road function
 - Boulevard trees
 - Sidewalks
 - Bicycle lanes where feasible
- Improve road system safety and access management by following appropriate guidelines for driveway openings, intersection spacing, signal timing, etc.
- Continue to build a connected bicycling network consisting of on-street lanes and off-street paths.
- Improve transit ridership by making transit accessible and convenient, and encouraging higher density, transit-oriented development in key activity centers.
- Create a city-wide system of parkways in conjunction with reconstruction of certain roadways such as Losey Boulevard and La Crosse Street.
- Promote quality passenger rail service from the La Crosse Depot while supporting efforts to create the Midwest Regional Rail System

Urban Design Plan

- Develop design standards for new buildings (except single family), landscaping, parking, and streets and incorporate into the new UDO. These standards should be based on the design guidelines provided in Appendix A of the Urban Design plan element. Use these guidelines and standards in the review and approval of new development.
- Create and adopt standards to foster flexible subdivision design such as TND and rural cluster housing.
- Improve the design of commercial signs through adoption of sign design standards.
- Consider adopting an ordinance requiring amortization of off-premise advertising within 30 years.
- Continue to implement, improve upon, and expand the wayfinding approach and design guidelines in the *City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update*.
- Establish City and neighborhood gateways at key locations using features such as monument signs, public art, distinctive landscaping, and banners.

- Upgrade the appearance of major road corridors by making streetscape improvements such as boulevard trees, ornamental lighting, special pavement, and banners.

Parks and Open Space Plan

- Improve park maintenance and safety.
- Expand the trail system and trail connections, particularly along the riverfront, the La Crosse River marsh, and the bluffs.
- Establish a parkway system to create an interconnected system of attractively landscaped roadways that connect the City's major parks and open spaces.
- Build special use facilities such as an athletic complex to meet increased recreation demands and changing needs.
- Update the park dedication requirement.
- Identify potential park sites and needs in future development areas.



Riverside Park

Neighborhoods and Housing Plan

- Continue to prepare and implement neighborhood plans in conformance with the objectives outlined in Confluence and use those plans to guide capital improvements and services.
- Continue to support and improve the City's code enforcement capabilities by providing adequate staff, training and technology.
- Foster home ownership through the provision of financial incentives and technical assistance programs.

- Develop a non-profit Community Development Corporation to build and rehabilitate housing.
- Encourage transit-oriented development through land use and zoning designation that encouraged relatively dense housing and mixed-use development near Municipal Transit Utility stops and along transit routes.
- Work to form support for a regional solution to the needs of housing affordability, homelessness and housing for special needs.
- Zone property to provide for a range of housing options from single family dwellings to multiple family apartments in appropriate locations throughout the City.
- Require major institutions, such as UW-L and Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center to establish growth boundaries and master plans.
- Increase the level of foot and bicycle patrols in higher crime neighborhoods to increase police presence and foster better relationships with residents.



Downtown Housing

Public Utilities Plan

- Maintain and improve sewer and water system infrastructure through continued identification of deficiencies and planned infrastructure enhancement, maintenance and rehabilitation.
- Follow annexation policy to only extend utilities outside the present City border in exchange for annexation or per an approved boundary agreement.

- Develop and adopt review and approval criteria and standards to evaluate utility system extensions and improvements, including costs and benefits.
- Establish a wellhead protection overlay zoning district and associated development standards for identified wellhead protection areas.
- Obtain a WPDES and develop a surface water management plan for the watershed that meets WPDES requirements.
- Incorporate BMPs into the zoning and subdivision ordinances (or UDO) and dedicate sufficient staff resources to enforce and monitor BMP implementation and performance.
- Model the storm water system to identify problem areas and prioritize possible corrective actions.

Community Facilities Plan

- Identify a site for a new library in the southern part of La Crosse. Consider making this a shared facility that also incorporates fire and police facilities.
- Work with the school district to evaluate the need for new school facilities and identify potential sites for such facilities.
- Regularly evaluate fire station locations to ensure that adequate fire protection service is available to all areas of the City.
- Continue to evaluate spatial and storage capacity needs of libraries, police and fire facilities.



South Community Library – 16th Street

Economic Development Plan

- Prepare and Economic Development Preparedness Plan by mid-2003.
- Use “Smart Growth” strategies to maintain the City’s leadership role in regional economic development.
- Aggressively facilitate redevelopment of underutilized properties through efforts to make sites ready for redevelopment to occur. This will also involve better utilization of the Redevelopment Authority powers and tools and pursuit of State and Federal grants and assistance to foster brownfield redevelopment.
- Continue to focus redevelopment efforts in the historic downtown and along the riverfront.
- Work to obtain State Technology Zone designation.
- Continue to foster neighborhood level economic development through creation of a Community Development Corporation and providing outreach and technical assistance to support groups, such as the Caledonia Street Merchants, involved in neighborhood commercial revitalization.
- Continue to actively participate in programs with organizations and institutions involved in economic development efforts such as: Technology Business Alliance, LADCO, Western Wisconsin Technical College, and UW-L.
- Continue to support creation of a Coulee Region Industrial Park Corporation.

Heritage Preservation Plan

- Continue to evaluate and locally designate significant properties and districts. Establish priorities for designation efforts.
- Develop preservation plans with design guidelines for local districts.
- Relocate Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) administration to the City Planning Department and assign appropriate staff to handle duties associated with the HPC and related permit reviews.
- Establish a clear and consistent process for building permit and development review involving significant properties and districts.
- Work to improve community understanding of heritage preservation programs and benefits through development and distribution of handouts and publications about the HPC and related activities and through efforts to build strong working relationships with

local organizations and community groups.

- Better integrate heritage preservation into neighborhood planning by including the HPC or a representative on groups established to develop neighborhood plans.



Ott Pure Oil Station – A designated local landmark

Intergovernmental Coordination Plan

- Improve the exchange of information through annual leaders' meetings, quarterly planners' meetings, presentations or displays about *Confluence*, internet-based communication and agency coordination.
- Participate in and strive for coordination of planning efforts undertaken by La Crosse County, LAPC, the townships, and others.
- Foster the sharing of public resources that have cross-jurisdictional use such as Geographical Information Systems, transit, water, sewer, fire and police protection.
- Work to establish a regional fair-share approach to provision of special needs facilities such as group homes. A regional approach should also be considered for provision of affordable housing.
- Seek annexations and boundary agreements that help La Crosse and surrounding communities grow wisely and efficiently and foster orderly, cost-effective utility extensions, environmentally sensitive fringe development and other Smart Growth objectives.

Plan Implementation

- Formally adopt *Confluence* as the guiding document for land development and related infrastructure planning, ordinance amendments, and preparing capital improvement programs.
- Replace the La Crosse zoning and subdivision ordinances with a UDO that is consistent with the objectives of *Confluence* and incorporates the development standards and design guidelines described in the various plan elements, in particularly Appendix A of the Urban Design plan element.
- Consistently enforce policy that the City will require annexation prior to extension of public utilities.
- Use *Confluence* to review development applications, prepare sub-area and neighborhood plans, guide redevelopment assistance and direct operational decisions.
- Review and amend *Confluence* annually to ensure that it remains relevant and useable. Periodically update the plan as conditions warrant. Formally review and plan every five years.

Appendix A

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Term
AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BMPs	Best management practices
CAP	Community Action Program
CBD	Central Business District
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CDC	Community Development Corporation
CLG	Certified Local Government
COE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
COP	Community Oriented Policing
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
CRIPCO	Coulee Region Industrial Park Corporation
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FRH	Fringe Residential Housing
HazMat	Hazardous Materials
HPC	Historic Preservation Commission
HRO	High Intensity Retail, Office or Housing
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
I-90	Interstate 90
ISTEA	Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
LACVB	La Crosse Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
LADCO	La Crosse Area Development Corporation
LAPC	La Crosse Area Planning Commission
LIPCO	La Crosse Industrial Park Corporation
LOS	Level of Service
L RTP	long-range transportation plan
MFI	Median Family Income
MIS	Major Investment Study
mph	Miles per hour
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MRO	Medium Intensity Retail, Office, or Housing
MRRPC	Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission
MS4s	Municipal Separated Storm Sewer Systems
MTU	Municipal Transit Utility
MWRRS	Midwest Regional Rail System
NHS	National Highway System

Acronym	Term
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRPA	National Recreation and Park Association
PILOT	Payment in Lieu of Taxes
PUD	Planned Unit Development
RAM	Recreation Activity Menu
RDA	Restricted Development Area
RENEW	Restore Everybody’s Neighborhood Effectively and Win
s.f.	Square Foot
SAGE	Student Achievement Guarantee in Education
SHP	State Highway Plan
TAZ	Transportation Analysis Zone
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TEA-21	1997 Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century
TIF	Tax increment financing
TIP	Transportation Improvement Plan
TMA	Transportation Management Association
TND	Traditional Neighborhood Development (or Design)
TWLTL	two-way left-turn-lane
UCR	United Coulee Region
UDO	Unified Development Ordinance
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
UW-L	University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
VPS	visual preference survey
WDNR	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
WHEDA	Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Association
WisDOT	Wisconsin Department of Transportation
WPDES	Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Storm Water Permit
WPSC	Wisconsin Public Service Commission
WWTC	Western Wisconsin Technical College
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant
YODA	Youth Outreach Direct Access

Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

2.0 Summary of Conditions and Issues Plan Element

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Table of Contents

PURPOSE AND SCOPE	1
COMMUNITY VALUES.....	1
MAJOR FINDINGS AND ISSUES	3
DEMOGRAPHICS	3
NATURAL RESOURCES	3
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT	4
TRANSPORTATION.....	6
PARKS.....	7
URBAN DESIGN	8
NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING.....	9
PUBLIC UTILITIES	10
PUBLIC FACILITIES	12
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	13
HERITAGE PRESERVATION.....	14
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION.....	15

Summary of Conditions and Issues

Purpose and Scope

This section summarizes the most pressing issues and challenges identified by the analysis of existing conditions and current trends. Each of the analysis chapters provides a more detailed description of existing conditions relevant to its subject and concludes with a listing of issues. An issue is a question to be studied, debated and resolved during the planning process in light of the other issues. The issues presented in this report are considered the most important and pressing issues facing the community.

Community Values

To gauge community attitudes and values about the future of La Crosse input was solicited through a public opinion survey, a Visual Preference Survey™ and a community open house called VisionFest.

Public Opinion Survey: A public opinion survey was mailed to 3,000 City residents in October 2000. A total of 735 surveys were completed and returned, representing a 24.5 percent return rate. The results suggest that City residents are generally satisfied with the existing quality of life in La Crosse, but would like to see more effort put into environmental protection, neighborhood redevelopment, property maintenance, aesthetic improvements to commercial and industrial properties, and congestion relief. A copy of the survey questions and responses are included in Appendix A.

Visual Preference Survey: A visual preference survey (VPS) is a technique using a series of slide images that are ranked by participants. This tool is intended to identify preferences relating to elements contributing to a community's character such as building design, landscaping, natural features, road design, signage, and land use mixes. A simplified version of a VPS was conducted with the La Crosse Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee in November 2000. A summary of the VPS results are included in Appendix B.

VisionFest: A public open house was held on Saturday April 21, 2001 to provide an opportunity for citizens to review and comment on the analyses of condition, preliminary planning issues and conceptual growth alternatives. The event consisted of a series of displays providing an overview of the La Crosse Comprehensive Plan, an analysis of existing conditions and issues relative to various subjects, and three conceptual future growth alternatives. In addition to the displays, two presentation/discussion sessions were led by Bill Weber of URS/BRW to engage participants in a dialog about issues and

challenges facing La Crosse. Several activities were also available for children to engage in. Participants were also asked to record their comments on the displays in a workbook. A questionnaire regarding urban design issues was also included in the workbook. The questionnaire responses were tabulated and graphed and the workbook comments were summarized, tabulated and ranked. These are included in Appendix C.

Following is a summary of the predominant issues and values expressed by the community:

Habitat and Natural Character: La Crosse residents place a high value on the natural features and character of their community. Given the visual prominence of these features, the natural landscape contributes greatly to the identity of La Crosse. There also appears to be strong support for protecting wildlife habitat and the natural character of the area, through stronger regulatory controls if necessary.

Community Appearance: The historic charm of the City is recognized as an important community asset. However, some areas of the community are showing signs of physical deterioration and poor property maintenance. In addition, inappropriate uses and insensitively designed infill development have negatively impacted the character of some neighborhoods.

Redevelopment and Revitalization: Efforts to redevelop the riverfront have been very well received by the community. Similarly, there appears to be broad community support for neighborhood revitalization activities. It is recognized that building on the City's existing assets, in particular its charming older neighborhoods and architecture and beautiful natural setting, is an effective way to attract and retain residents and businesses.

Growth Management: While there is very little vacant land left inside the City limits for new development, the community favors taking a conservative approach to expand growth into the outlying coulee areas. Priority should be placed on identifying opportunities for redevelopment and infill within the City in order to accommodate new development.

Major Institutions: The community places a high value on the presence of major institutions such as the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L), St. Francis/Viterbo, and Gundersen/Lutheran Medical Center. However, their expansion into surrounding neighborhoods is seen as a threat to the stability and residential scale and character of these neighborhoods.

Major Findings and Issues

Following are the major findings and issues relevant to specific subjects.

Demographics

Findings

- Over the next 20 years the City is expected to grow modestly, adding about 4,000 people to its population.
- The City's population will continue to become more racially and ethnically diverse.
- The number of retired people will increase over the next 20 years.
- Households in the City will continue to have incomes below the regional median.
- Employment growth (jobs) will be strongly influenced by the availability of land for new commercial and industrial development.
- The City's share of all jobs within the region is expected to decline over the next 20 years.

Issues

- **Capturing Growth:** What, if anything, should the City do to capture more of the forecast future population and job growth?
- **Changing Demographic Mix:** How can the City accommodate the diverse needs of its minority, senior and low-income population?

Natural Resources

Findings

- The City and surround vicinity contains significant natural resources that are highly valued by the community. The most notable resources include: the bluffs, the Mississippi River and the La Crosse River and Marsh. Other significant features include: the Black River, the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge, the various trout streams, and Hixon Forest.
- Community residents have expressed strong support for protection and enhancement of the area's natural resources – both to maintain wildlife habitat and ecosystems and to increase opportunities for recreational enjoyment of natural areas.

- Natural resources are not bound by political boundaries and are subject to multi-jurisdictional regulations. As a result, protection, enhancement and management of natural resources requires cooperation and coordination between the various governmental agencies with regulatory authority over these resources.

Issues

- **Balance:** What should be the balance between urban development and protection of high quality natural resources? As redevelopment occurs, does the City support a use that is more consistent with the floodplain designation, such as parkland and natural areas?
- **Development Controls:** Should the City promote development that is clustered to limit habitat fragmentation, particularly in the creek valleys and blufflands? Can the City provide the services required for more compact development? (Sewage treatment, roads and bridges, stormwater treatment)
- **Recreational Opportunities:** Should the City take steps to increase recreational opportunities within natural resource areas, such as the La Crosse marsh?
- **Cooperation and Coordination:** Can or should a multi-jurisdictional approach be taken to ecological protection? Should the City of La Crosse and the Towns of Medary and Shelby collaborate on a surface water management plan that addresses the entire watershed for the sake of flood control, water quality and wildlife habitat?



Restricting development on bluffs and coulee slopes is an issue related to protection of natural resources and land use and development

Land Use and Development

Findings

- There is very little vacant land available in the City for new development. Redevelopment on property in the City can be expensive due to costs associated with pollution clean up, providing adequate access, and compliance with current codes. However, redevelopment presents opportunities to increase the tax base, create new jobs, and improve the environment and appearance of the City.
- Opportunities for outward expansion of the City are limited by high costs to extend utilities and roads, environmental protection goals and regulations, and annexation policies that favor Townships.
- Outlying communities have available vacant land suitable for development and good access to I-90 and other major roadways. These factors make them very attractive to residents and businesses looking for affordable, vacant land for new development.
- While the City's major institutions (hospitals, colleges) are valued community assets, they contribute to the large amount of tax-exempt property in the City and their expansion needs have compromised the stability and character of some surrounding neighborhoods.
- Major commercial road corridors are becoming increasingly congested and their lack of pedestrian scale and visually cluttered appearance detract from the overall community character and identity. Limited north-south road capacity and natural barriers, such as The Marsh, pose threats to maintaining good access between downtown and the I-90 corridor, which is becoming increasingly important to the economic health of the City.

Issues

- **Strategic Focus:** What should be the balance in this plan relative to planning for fringe development versus neighborhood revitalization or redevelopment?
- **Housing Growth:** To what extent should the City attempt to add more housing units? How much is the City willing to spend with regard to utility extensions, environmental protection, road improvements and/or risk strained intergovernmental relations to foster such growth?
- **Transportation Impact:** Should the City take steps to amend its pattern of land use in order to reduce auto trips and the demand for road improvements?

- **Living with Regional Amenities:** How can the City better utilize and respond to its two greatest natural resources - the Mississippi River and the bluffs? To what degree should these resources influence how La Crosse plans for new development and redevelopment?
- **Major Institutions:** What should be the City's response to the continuing need for growth of the major local institutions such as the hospitals and colleges?
- **Appearance:** What should the City do, if anything, to improve its overall physical appearance? Should the City take design cues from the major regional features such as the Mississippi River and the bluffs?

Transportation

Findings

- As has occurred across the country, driving in La Crosse has increased dramatically over the last several decades. Transit ridership is also quite low. However, La Crosse has a higher than average number of people who walk or bike to get around. This is due in part to the large student population and the compact design of older neighborhoods.
- The City's roadway network is characterized by the traditional grid pattern of streets with adjacent sidewalks. The City has also begun developing a network of bicycle trails and lanes.
- Currently congestion is not a major problem in the City. However, projected traffic demand suggests congestion will increase, particularly on north-south routes. This is aggravated by physical constraints on north-south movement across The La Crosse River Valley Marsh. However, the community recently rejected a referendum to develop a new north-south corridor through a portion of the La Crosse River Valley Marsh.



Many people in La Crosse ride bicycles for recreation and as a means of transportation
(photo: Tom Huber, State Bicycle Coordinator, WDOT)

Issues

- **Transportation Alternatives:** Should the City implement policies that promote alternatives to driving alone? If so, to what extent?
- **Tradeoffs:** What sacrifices or tradeoffs, if any, is the community willing to make in terms of land development or neighborhood quality to improve auto movement?
- **Access Management:** To protect transportation investments, what levels of access management should be implemented and on what portion of the transportation system (e.g., all access, near intersections, by type of land use)?
- **Transit Needs:** Is the existing public transit system effectively serving the transportation needs of the community?

Parks

Findings

- The City currently has over 50 parks located on over 1,400 acres, not including the La Crosse River Marsh. Because there is virtually no vacant land left in the City, opportunities to create new parks are limited. However, some new parks may be created in conjunction with redevelopment or new subdivisions in fringe areas.
- Many of the City's parks are quite old and in need of facility improvements and, in some cases, expansions or retrofitting to accommodate new recreational trends and needs. In particular, the rising popularity of soccer has increased demand for new soccer fields and a major athletic complex.
- Recreational programming must respond to changing demographics and lifestyles. Some key trends include: the increased senior population as baby boomers begin to retire, the growing diversity of the population, and increased demand for day care type services in parks. In order to accommodate a widening spectrum of needs park programming and staff may need to become more sensitive to access and language barriers and other issues that could impact participation in recreational programs and facility use.

Issues

- **Limited Land:** Should the City attempt to acquire any land for public parks if opportunities arise? Should the City encourage the conversion of developed properties located in the floodplain into parks and open space?
- **Linkages:** Should the City build more pedestrian and bicycle corridors to link the rivers, marsh and bluffs? What about linkages between existing parks?

- **Access:** Should physical access to the City’s significant natural resources (rivers, marsh, bluffs) be increased or improved through creation of more trails, canoe/boat launches, etc.)?
- **Safety and Maintenance:** What concerns, if any, does the community have regarding safety in using the City’s park and trail facilities? Are the City’s park and trail facilities adequately maintained?
- **Changing Demographics:** Should the City provide more specialized programs, such as day care, after-school care, or senior programs? Does language pose a barrier to participation in park and recreation programs?



New multi-use trail near the riverfront

Urban Design

Findings

- The natural features of the surrounding landscape are highly valued and are key components of La Crosse’s identity and “sense of place”. They embody the image of the high quality of life people attribute to the area. Community input suggest that protecting the character of natural features from insensitive development should be given high priority.
- The City’s historic and traditional architecture is valued for its character, high quality of design and attention to detail. Similarly, older, traditional neighborhoods are valued for their mix of densities and uses, and pedestrian scale. Unfortunately, the character of many older neighborhoods has been compromised by insensitive design of infill buildings, inadequate property maintenance and institutional encroachment, particularly the proliferation of parking lots in residential neighborhoods.
- Major roadways and adjacent development appears visually cluttered due to excessive and haphazard signage, utility poles, inadequate landscaping and screening of large surface parking lots, and little consistency in building design or materials.

Issues

- **Physical Deterioration:** To what extent does physical deterioration of buildings and property negatively impact the appearance and desirability of a neighborhood? To curb further deterioration, should the City focus its efforts on rehabilitation of existing structures or demolition and replacement?

- **Visual Clutter:** To what extent does the variety and number of signs, utility poles, outdoor storage of merchandise and parking lots detract from the attractiveness of the City? To what extent should the City control the quantity, size, location, and appearance of these items? Should the City require additional screening and landscaping of commercial and industrial properties to improve their appearance?
- **Protect Natural Character:** o what extent has development negatively impacted the appearance of the City's significant natural features (e.g., bluffs, rivers, marsh)? Should protection of these resources be given priority over providing access to them? To what degree would the community support the City's taking stronger steps to protect these resources?
- **Inappropriate Building Design:** ow important is it for buildings in a neighborhood to share common design elements such as height, materials, and architectural style? To what extent, if at all, should the City regulate the appearance and architectural design of private buildings and properties to achieve design cohesiveness?

Neighborhoods and Housing

Findings

- Much of the City's housing is over 50 years old and beginning to show signs of deterioration. This is aggravated by inadequate maintenance and insufficient City resources devoted to enforcement of property maintenance codes.
- Over 50 percent of dwellings in the City are rental units. This is largely a response to the student population. It is also a result of past zoning and land use policies that favored multi-family developments. The large amount of rental property can contribute to neighborhood deterioration and instability because renters do not have a vested interest in maintaining or improving property and tend to be fairly transient.
- Until recently, the City had fairly lenient development controls. As a result, little attention was paid to the type, design, or scale of new housing built to replace demolished older homes. Many of these newer, mostly multi-family structures are not compatible with the design of surrounding houses and detract from the neighborhood character and charm. These lenient development controls also functioned as a disincentive for property owners to reinvest in their homes because they felt they had no control or assurance that the character and quality of their neighborhood would remain intact to protect their investment.
- The limited land available for new housing development in the City reduces opportunities to build new housing types geared toward current needs and tastes. The lack of housing choice in the City is one of the factors that appears to be pushing mid-to-higher income households to outlying areas where they can find the type of home that meets their needs.

Issues

- **Limited Housing Choice:** The City has had difficulty retaining moderate to higher income residents due to the low number of mid to higher priced homes. In addition, desirable building sites for moderate income, single-family homes, are scarce. The abundance of homes under \$60,000 (67 percent) and lack of housing options is pushing moderate to high income residents to Onalaska, Holmen and West Salem where available land allows more housing choices. What can the City do to increase housing options in the City targeted to moderate to higher income households?
- **Old Housing:** Greater than 50 percent of housing units are over 50 years old and 37 percent were built before 1939. Much of this was poorly constructed and maintenance has been deferred over the years. Older rental stock is also being neglected. What, if anything, can the City do to improve housing conditions?
- **High Percent Rental:** Renter-occupied units increased from 45.5 percent of the total units in 1980 to 52.6 percent in 1990. Single family homes in areas around campus have been eliminated and replaced with apartment complexes. In addition, many of these homes have been converted to rental apartments. While the demand for rental units is high, given a large student population, renters tend to be more transient and therefore can negatively impact neighborhood stability. What should the City's balance be between accommodating demand for rental units and providing adequate options for home ownership?
- **Design:** No minimum design standards exist for housing. This has resulted in new infill housing that is incompatible with surrounding homes in terms of aesthetics and architectural design. Should the City enact and enforce design regulations to ensure that new infill housing is compatible with the existing housing in the neighborhood?
- **Property Maintenance:** To what extent should the City become more proactive in enforcing property maintenance codes? What, if anything, can the City do to encourage private property maintenance?
- **Reinvestment:** What, if anything, should the City do to encourage private reinvestment in neighborhoods? What, if anything, can the City do to prevent further neighborhood decay and disinvestment?



Trash accumulation in alley

Public Utilities

Findings

- The City's existing sanitary sewer and water systems are in good condition and are adequately designed to accommodate anticipated future growth on the northeast and southeast ends of La Crosse. However, when new fringe development occurs some limited system improvements may be necessary to ensure that the current quality of service continues in existing developed areas.
- Current City policy requires annexation in order to hook up to the water distribution system. However, the City has established a precedent to provide sanitary sewer service to unincorporated areas in Shelby and Campbell Townships. As a result, it may be difficult to retroactively force those areas to annex unless they need City water service.
- Managing storm water run-off in La Crosse is complicated by the geography of the area. While the City has a system of storm sewer pipes designed to handle run-off within the City, water from the bluffs and coulees beyond the City border naturally drains toward the rivers and therefore, through the City. Therefore, managing the quantity and quality of run-off received from outside the City requires considerable cooperation and coordination between adjacent governing bodies.
- Flooding is a major storm water management issue. Local flooding is primarily caused by insufficient storm sewer pipe capacity. River flooding is also a persistent threat due to the large area of the City (mostly northern area) within the 100-year floodplain and a system of dikes that does not meet current design standards.

Issues

- **Annexation:** The City has established a precedent to serve unincorporated areas in Shelby and Campbell Townships. Should the City continue to provide sewer service to these areas without requiring annexation? Should the City provide sewer service to new areas without annexation?
- **Sewer Extensions:** Should the City (including sewer system ratepayers) extend sewer service to outlying areas at any cost in exchange for annexation? Should sewer service be extended to distant outlying areas if it results in decreased quality of service within the current service area?
- **Development Controls:** To what extent should the City establish stronger development controls to limit impervious surface area, reduce street widths, and limit vegetation clearance and grading to minimize the amount of run-off?
- **Funding:** Funding will be needed for storm water management projects and improvements within the City, but current City ordinances seem to limit funding to the

General Funds. Should the City establish a Storm Water Utility to provide a steady source of funding?

Public Facilities

Findings

- Public Facilities serve the public interest and contribute to the sense of community in La Crosse. These include facilities and services such as: schools, libraries, police and fire protection.
- La Crosse is currently served by 16 public primary and secondary schools and 16 private schools. In addition, there are three post-secondary educational facilities – UW-L, Viterbo University and Western Wisconsin Technical College. There are three public libraries in the City in addition to many libraries found within other community institutions, such as the universities.
- La Crosse is served by four fire stations. In addition to fire services, the La Crosse Fire Department responds to medical emergency calls. The City also provides fire protection service to the communities of La Crescent and Shelby and is expected to provide service to Onalaska soon.
- The City’s police force consists of 99 sworn officers and 22 civilian employees. The La Crosse Police Department embraces the Community Oriented Policing philosophy to maintain a highly visible presence within neighborhoods.

Issues

- **Declining Enrollment:** A significant amount of future population growth is forecast to occur to the north and east of La Crosse that could result in declining enrollment and closure of some City schools. What, if anything, can the City do to encourage residents to remain in the school district?
- **Library Expansion and Storage Needs:** With very limited vacant land left in the City, should the City proactively seek sites to meet future expansion and storage needs or should greater emphasis be placed on improving off-site services such as the Bookmobile and Yoda Van to service growing populations outside the City?
- **Fire Station Closures:** Due to the overlap in service areas, some existing fire stations may be closed. Should the City consider closing some fire stations to reduce service overlaps even though response time may increase?
- **Police Facility and Staff Needs:** The Police Department reports a dramatic increase in Calls for Service and Arrests in recent years. To what extent should the City consider increased funding for additional staff and facility improvements to meet increased work loads?

Economic Development

Findings

- One of the primary economic development challenges in La Crosse is the limited supply of land suitable for industrial development. On the other hand, opportunities exist for clean up and development of brownfield (polluted) sites and redevelopment of underused properties within the City.
- Another challenge is the increase in low paying service sector jobs and the decline in manufacturing jobs. While the overall number of jobs may increase, wages for many service sector jobs tend to be quite low. This can create a class of “working poor”, or people employed full time, but at low wages which keep them dependent on social services. Also, in recent years there have been significant layoffs at area industries, resulting in a net loss of “living wage” jobs.
- The City has primarily relied on the La Crosse Area Development Corporation (LADCO) and an ad-hoc group of City department heads to lead economic development efforts. While these efforts have been successful, the City does not have a formal economic development program with dedicated staff to concentrate on this vital aspect of community development.



New riverfront development - Century-Tel Grand Opening

Issues

- **Land Availability:** The City is fast running out of land for industrial development. Should the City take proactive steps to identify and market sites suitable for redevelopment for industrial and/or business uses?
- **Living Wage Employment:** With the loss of manufacturing jobs in recent years the City has experienced a decline in jobs that pay a “living wage”? What, if any role should the City take in efforts to retain or even recruit higher paying manufacturing jobs? What, if anything, should the City do to promote and recruit job growth in the technology sector?
- **Central Business District Incubator:** Downtown La Crosse has been the incubator for white-collar job growth in recent years. What, if anything, should the City do to solidify the regional significance of the historic central business district?
- **Economic Development Staff:** Although the City and LADCO have been successful in retaining and recruiting employers, there is currently no staff assigned to proactively and systematically address broader economic development issues. Should the City dedicate a staff person to proactively facilitate economic development and redevelopment efforts?

Heritage Preservation

Findings

The City of La Crosse formally initiated its heritage preservation efforts with the appointment of a preservation group in 1973, the forerunner of today’s Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). While the HPC is charged with designating historically significant properties and reviewing alterations to them, they lack the power to enforce Certificates of Recommendation. As an advisory body, their recommendations are subject to being overturned by the City Council.

In 1996 the City became a Certified Local Government (CLG), enabling the HPC to qualify for state-supported financial assistance to undertake preservation activities. Other City preservation tools include: an Overlay Zoning District mechanism, the La Crosse Commercial Historic District Preservation Plan, an ordinance protecting shipwrecks, and a pending ordinance protecting significant archeological resources.

The City is graced with numerous historically significant buildings. To date the City’s designated properties consist of three National Register districts, 23 individual National Register properties, and 53 locally designated properties. While designation does not preclude demolition, it does raise awareness and ensure review of alterations by the HPC, although their recommendations are advisory.

Issues

- **Protection Tools:** To what extent could the Overlay Zoning District mechanism be used in protecting historic resources and guiding redevelopment activities? Are there barriers to its use? Would design review guidelines enable the HPC to better serve the public and the City of La Crosse in dealing with neighborhood planning?
- **Role of the HPC:** How can the HPC begin to work with the Common Council, neighborhood groups, and others to develop a better understanding of the benefits of heritage preservation?
- **HPC Staffing:** Is there support for moving the HPC administrative responsibilities to the Planning Department, while maintaining the legal advice and assistance of the City Attorney's Office?
- **Scope of Preservation Efforts:** To what extent should the community protect and interpret cultural resources, including those that go beyond significant architectural resources and historic districts?

Intergovernmental Coordination

Findings

- The Comprehensive Planning Legislation Guidelines require an Intergovernmental Coordination Element be included in new comprehensive plans. The purpose is to identify and resolve incompatible goals, objectives and policies regarding development in the region in order to reduce or eliminate duplication and improve delivery of services and facilities. Existing points of conflict and a mechanism for conflict resolution must also be identified. Mechanisms for cooperation primarily take the form of intergovernmental agreements, leases and contracts.
- The City's primary coordination efforts involve: La Crosse County, City of Onalaska, City of La Crescent, MN, Town of Shelby, Town of Campbell, School District of La Crosse, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the La Crosse Area Planning Committee. Primary areas of coordination include: public works, water and sanitary sewer, police, fire, park and recreation, transit, information management, recycling, assessing, municipal airport, and personnel.
- The City's secondary coordination efforts involve: Federal agencies (Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Transportation); State agencies (Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Commerce, Revenue, Administration, Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Legislature and Governor's office), Regional agencies (Mississippi River Regional Planning

Commission and the La Crosse Area Planning Committee); Local utilities (Excel Energy, Dairyland Power Cooperative, Vernon Electric, Cable TV franchise, and CenturyTel telephone company). The main areas of coordination include: flood control, flood insurance, Mississippi River navigation, Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, census issues, economic development, transit, highways, wetland protection, grant funding, annexation review, statute revisions and energy/utility issues.

Issues

- **Perception of City:** The City has been labeled as being uncooperative with adjacent municipalities. However, based on the number and type of agreements with adjacent units of government, the City has demonstrated cooperation with other communities. How can the City better get the word out that it has and does cooperate with other units of government?
- **Delivery of Water and Sewer Services Outside of City Limits:** Should the City consider providing water and sewer service outside the City limits without annexation and if so, under what circumstances?
- **Open Space Conservation:** The La Crosse area has significant and unique environmental assets that are integral to the desirability of the area. What is the best way to ensure cooperation between the State, County, Cities, Villages, and Towns in the region in the conservation of key environmental assets such as the bluffs, the marsh, and the rivers? Is it necessary to designate and prioritize vital areas for future protection?
- **Maximizing Use of Existing Facilities:** While the City and the School District of La Crosse have had a long standing arrangement for the shared use of facilities, there is room for continued or expanded cooperation. Each group claims autonomy over certain decisions yet both entities are responsible to the same taxpayers. The City and the School District should have a symbiotic relationship in that great schools beget great neighborhoods and vice versa. How can the City and School Board improve their relationship that is quite cordial regarding use of facilities, to other areas of equal benefit?

Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

3.0 Natural Resources Plan Element

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Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES.....	1
NATURAL RESOURCE UTILIZATION	1
NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION	1
NATURAL RESOURCE ENHANCEMENT	1
GUIDANCE FROM THE CONCEPT PLAN	2
OVERVIEW OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN	3
SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES	3
NATURAL RESOURCE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS.....	5
WATER RESOURCES	5
WOODLAND RESOURCES.....	13
WILDLIFE RESOURCES	15
SOIL RESOURCES	18
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION	20
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM	21
IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR NATURAL RESOURCES	21

List of Figures

FIGURE 3-1 SENSITIVE RESOURCES	7
FIGURE 3-2 WETLAND BUFFERS	9

List of Tables

TABLE 3-1: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR NATURAL RESOURCES	21
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Appendices

- Appendix A Water Quality Best Management Practices
- Appendix B Low Impact Development and Conservation Design Techniques
- Appendix C List of Native Species for Restoration Projects in La Crosse

Natural Resources Plan Element

The City of La Crosse is fortunate to have a variety of high-quality natural resources within and adjacent to its borders. The most significant resources, in terms of size and quality, include the Mississippi and Black Rivers on the western border, the La Crosse River marsh bisecting the central city, and the oak bluffs along the eastern border. Each of these resources presents challenges for management, protection and development. Protection and enhancement of these natural resources is essential to maintain the quality of life for the citizens of La Crosse. The purpose of the Natural Resources plan element is to safeguard and improve environmental features as a means of promoting sustainable urban development, revitalization and quality of life.

Summary of Natural Resource Issues

The Natural Resources plan element is based on findings presented in the Conditions and Issues Report, with direction provided by the public survey, Citizens Advisory Committee and VisionFest. The major natural resource issues may be summarized as:

Natural Resource Utilization

- To what extent should the City control development activities in order to avoid impacts to natural resources?
- Should the City actively pursue opportunities to convert areas within the floodplain to more appropriate uses that could withstand periodic flooding?
- Should the City actively pursue and implement creation of additional recreational opportunities in natural areas?

Natural Resource Protection

- To what extent should the City pursue opportunities to protect natural resources?
- What level of regulatory control is necessary to meet natural resource protection goals?
- Can or should a multi-jurisdictional approach be taken to protect sensitive natural resources?

Natural Resource Enhancement

- What, if anything, should be done to restore or enhance natural resources within the City of La Crosse?

- How can the City work with other government agencies to accomplish natural resource enhancement goals?

Guidance from the Concept Plan

The Concept Plan for *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan* stresses the importance of building on the strengths inherent to La Crosse - particularly its unique and beautiful natural setting - with an emphasis on neighborhood revitalization. The Concept Plan provides this direction to the Natural Resources Plan:

- **Sensitive Environments:** There should be an emphasis on restoring water quality and wildlife habitat. The City should acquire land and adopt strong regulations to protect bluffs, coulees and wooded hillsides. New housing development should incorporate buffers around creek floodplains.
- **Natural Corridors:** The City should emphasize the protection of significant environmental corridors for recreation and wildlife movement. There should be a coordinated regional response to the need to identify and protect such resources, led by La Crosse County and including Houston and Winona Counties.
- **New Housing:** New housing development should be carefully sited to protect the natural character and appearance of bluffs and minimize views of homes from below. House clustering techniques should be used to protect significant natural resources and open space.

The City should require that land developers incorporate creeks, wetlands and significant woodlands as amenities in new subdivisions. Streets, street edges and parking lots should be designed to filter water, provide shade and minimize natural impacts.



Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

Overview of the Natural Resources Plan

The primary goal relative to natural resources is to maintain and enhance the natural resources present within and adjacent to the City of La Crosse. The Natural Resources plan element establishes a framework to guide public actions and development decisions to enhance, restore and protect significant natural resources.



La Crosse River

Summary of Objectives

The major natural resource objectives are summarized below:

Objective 1: Improve Water Quality. Improve the quality of water in the streams and rivers that flow through the City of La Crosse.

Objective 2: Protect Groundwater. Protect groundwater from surface contamination.

Objective 3: Protect Wetlands. Protect and enhance the quality of wetlands within the City of La Crosse.

Objective 4: Protect Wooded Bluffs. Protect and enhance the quality of wooded uplands, particularly wooded bluffs.

Objective 5: Protect Woodlands and Trees. Maintain and protect mature trees on public property, along public streets, and on private property to enhance the urban forest and urban wildlife habitat. In addition, promote stewardship of woodlands.

Objective 6: Habitat Fragmentation. Minimize potential for habitat fragmentation and habitat degradation.

Objective 7: Wildlife Management. Improve management of City-owned property for wildlife.

Objective 8: Wildlife Corridors. Enhance quality of wildlife corridor connections.

Objective 9: Protect Habitat. Avoid development impacts to habitat for federally threatened, endangered or state listed species and natural communities.

Objective 10: Minimize Erosion. Minimize erosion and degradation of soil resources.

Objective 11: Protect Steep Slopes. Strengthen development regulations to restrict buildings and roads on slopes greater than or equal to 20 percent.

Objective 12: Coordinate Protection Efforts. Coordinate natural resource protection and enhancement efforts with appropriate local, state and federal agencies.



Rim of the City road: Bluff top development

Natural Resource Objectives and Actions

This section provides a detailed description of the City's natural resource management objectives and corresponding actions necessary to meet those objectives.

Water Resources

The City of La Crosse contains significant water resources, including the Mississippi River, La Crosse River, the La Crosse River marsh, floodplains and small creeks. Protection of these resources contributes to the quality of life for the citizens of La Crosse by providing enhanced recreational opportunities and by preserving the natural beauty of the area.

Objective 1: Improve Water Quality. Improve the quality of water in the streams and rivers that flow through the City of La Crosse.

The capacity of water resources to provide habitat and conditions necessary for aquatic life is dependent on water quality and preservation of natural vegetation, to a large extent. The City can directly affect water resources through management of storm water, construction sites, and review of development plans.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Surface Water Management Plan.** The City shall collaborate with adjacent cities, towns, La Crosse County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to prepare and adopt a Surface Water Management Plan for the entire watershed. The plan should address water quality and quantity using traditional best management practices (BMPs) (see Appendix A) as well as conservation design techniques (see Appendix B). Surface water management should be based on a non-degradation policy; i.e., post-development pollution loads should not exceed pre-development loads for a defined sub-watershed. This regional plan should be coordinated with the storm water management objectives and actions outlined in the Public Utility plan element of this comprehensive plan.
- 2. Development Plan Review.** The City shall require sediment and erosion control BMPs for all new development and redevelopment. The development review process shall include evaluation of a storm water management plan for the project site to ensure that it complies with City regulations. In addition, and construction site inspection shall be conducted to ensure that the erosion control practices are properly installed and maintained.
- 3. Riparian Buffers.** The City shall require preservation and maintenance of permanently vegetated buffers along all perennial streams, including the Mississippi River, Black River, La Crosse River, Mormon Creek, Pammel Creek (where natural vegetation exists), and other unnamed streams. These sensitive water resources are shown on Figure 3-1. Buffers shall be required on all new development. In particular, non-woody buffers shall be 50 feet wide and shall be maintained in a natural (unmowed) condition.

Woody or shrub buffers shall be 75 feet wide. Use of native plantings would be promoted over traditional turf in both industrialized and residential settings. Several types of wetland buffers are illustrated on Figure 3-2.

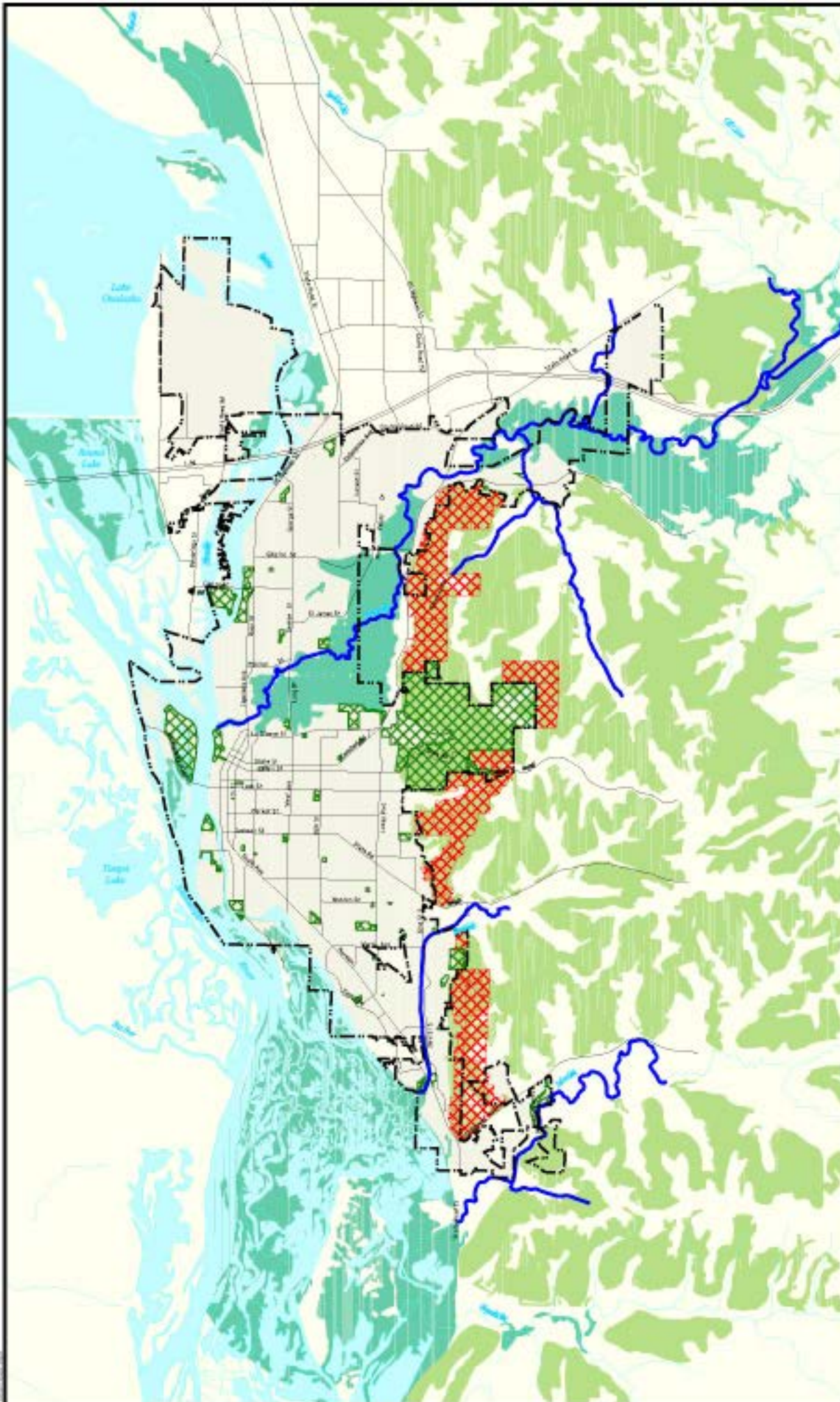


Rain gardens function to store runoff and can also provide attractive community amenities.

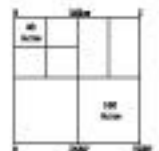


Figure 3-1

***Sensitive
Natural
Resources***



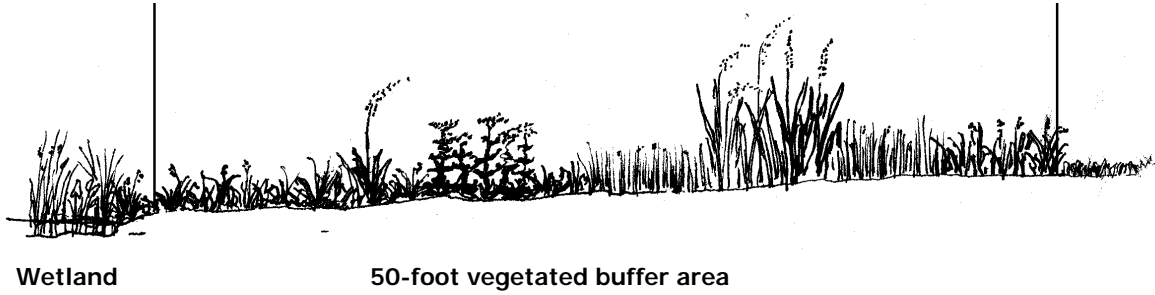
-  *Municipal Boundary*
-  *Street*
-  *City of La Crosse*
-  *Water*
-  *Wetland Complex*
-  *Critical Rivers and Streams*
-  *LaCrosse Parks*
-  *Bluff Protection Area*
-  *Critical Slopes and Woodlands*



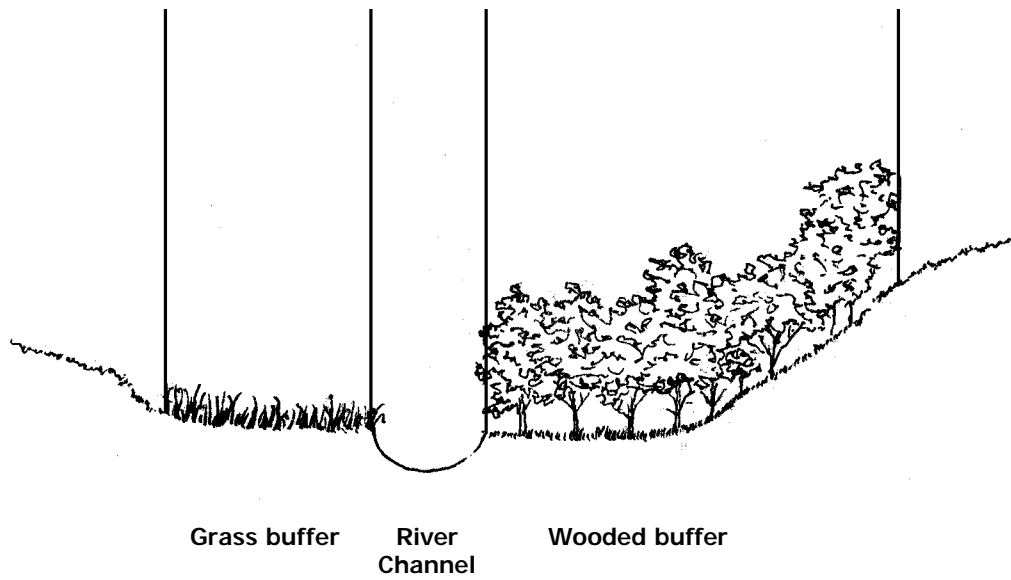
**City of
La Crosse
Comprehensive
Plan**

Figure 3-2 Wetland Buffers

Example of 50-foot Wetland Buffer:



Example of Buffer around a River:



4. Riparian Restoration. On City-owned property, streamside buffers shall be vegetated using native vegetation and bioengineering techniques to the extent feasible. The use of rip-rap and other hardscapes to control erosion would be discouraged unless no feasible vegetative alternatives exist.

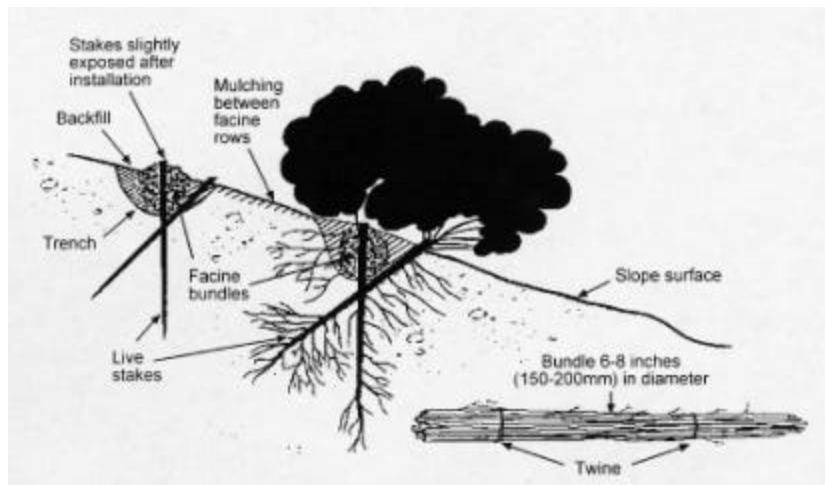
Soil bioengineering is a living technology consisting of plant structures that initially add stability to banks through live stem stakes, and overtime, through root systems. Roots consolidate soil particles as a mass, thus reducing the potential of the bank to slump or collapse. Growth of plant stems and leaves creates a shoreland buffer that reduces run-off velocities, cleanses the water by collecting sediment, redirects flow, and offers surface erosion control protection. Use of native species for bioengineering will enhance biological diversity and complement the landscape restoration and wildlife habitat recommendations.

The following four bioengineering methods are recommended for use in La Crosse:

Joint Planting is a system that installs live vegetative stakes between the joints of previously placed rip-rap rock. As the plants grow, a mat of roots spreads beneath the rocks, increasing the stability of the existing structure and placing the new filtration buffer on the surface. The technique is simple and low cost, but produces highly effective ecological and aesthetic results.

Live Facine structures are bound bundles of live-cut branches. They are tied together securely and placed into trenches along stream banks, upland slopes, wetlands, or in gullies. The live facine bundles are typically installed with live stakes and dead stout stakes, and often used in conjunction with erosion control fabrics. Plantings follow contour lines in dry areas, breaking up slopes into a series of shorter slopes separated by benches. Mini-dam structures are created capable of holding soil on slopes. The technique provides surface stability, which speeds the natural process of vegetation.

Wattling or Live Facines



Brush mattress is a system that combines living structures to form an immediate protective surface cover on riverbanks. Live stakes, live facine, and a branch mattress cover are installed, resulting in rapid growth of heavy vegetation.

Vegetated Geogrid is useful for the reconstruction of steep fill slopes. This technique involves the installation of live rooted plants, branch cuttings, and soil lifts wrapped with geogrid, in regular arrays in the face of reconstructed slopes. The branches are oriented perpendicular to the slope, and when combined with geogrid material, offer significant reinforcements to soils. This method is most useful for upland slopes and riverbanks to solve complex, deeper instability and higher run-off velocity conditions.

Application of these techniques on selected sites along streams and rivers in La Crosse will vastly improve the ecological function of the riverbank by vegetating denuded sites, creating a shoreland buffer for filtering run-off, stabilizing slopes, reducing erosion, and connecting habitat for wildlife in the river corridor. The aesthetic effect of implementation can be dramatic, with luxuriant growth along streams, softening and greening the stream landscape for park and trail users and recreational boaters.

5. **Mormon Creek.** The City shall require buffers around new development within the Mormon Creek watershed where appropriate to minimize potential impacts to trout habitat and water temperatures. Buffers directly adjacent to the creek shall include a shrubby or woody component to provide shading to maintain lower water temperatures and to provide overhanging habitat for trout. Priority shall be given to stormwater management practices that increase infiltration rather than direct outfall to the creek.
6. **Homeowner Education.** The City shall provide educational materials for homeowners regarding management of fertilizer, waste oil and chemical disposal, yard waste, roof water, car washing, deicing materials, riparian buffers, etc. to improve the quality of water entering the natural environment via the City storm sewer system.

Objective 2: Protect Groundwater. Protect groundwater from surface contamination.

The water supply for the City of La Crosse is derived from groundwater wells and surface water reservoirs. Protection of the City’s water supply is essential to maintain existing services, limit financial liabilities and to maintain a livable community.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Wellhead Protection.** The City shall implement the recommendations in the City’s *Wellhead Protection Plan*, including adoption of related zoning regulations. The plan should delineate the wellhead recharge area and reservoir watersheds, identify potential contaminant sources within these areas, and describe actions to monitor and minimize potential contamination of the water supply.

- 2. Groundwater Recharge.** The City shall encourage groundwater recharge through the use of infiltration practices (infiltration basins, rainwater gardens, retention basins, etc.) in conjunction with surface water management for all new developments and for redevelopment within City-owned properties.

Objective 3: Protect Wetlands. Protect and enhance the quality of wetlands within the City of La Crosse

Wetlands are protected by federal, state and local regulations because of their values for wildlife, flood control, water filtering capacity, vegetative diversity and aesthetics. The La Crosse River marsh is a high-quality wetland resource that should be protected from degradation.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Wetland Buffers.** For new development and redevelopment, the City shall require wetland buffers with widths ranging from a minimum of 10 feet to 50 feet, depending on wetland quality (see Figure 3-2). High-quality wetlands, such as the La Crosse River marsh, shall require 50-foot buffers. Low-quality wetlands, such as those used as stormwater ponds, shall require ten foot buffers. The buffers shall be maintained in a natural condition (not mowed) and, if planted, shall include native vegetation. Wetland quality shall be determined using a wetland function and value assessment, such as the WDNR's Rapid Assessment Method.
- 2. Surface Water Management.** The City shall manage surface water runoff into wetlands from adjacent development to minimize wetland degradation due to water quality impacts. This should be accomplished through development plan review and construction site inspections that ensure proper installation and maintenance of erosion control practices.
- 3. Invasive Species Control.** Wetlands located on City-owned property shall be monitored for the presence of invasive plant species. Invasive species include European buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), common reed (*Phragmites australis*), purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinaceae*). The City shall work with the WDNR to identify management practices and prioritize wetlands for control of invasive species.
- 4. Restoration/Enhancement.** Wetlands located on City-owned property or property owned privately, that the owner wants to enhance, shall be monitored for the presence of invasive plant species and restoration techniques applied where feasible. A list of native plants for use in restoration is provided in Appendix C. While this list is not all inclusive, it provides a list of commonly available plant materials for use in restoration projects. The City shall work with the WDNR to identify management practices and prioritize wetlands for restoration and enhancement.

5. **Acquisition/Easements.** The City shall cooperate with the WDNR and local conservation groups to identify potential easement acquisitions to enlarge the public open space within the La Crosse River marsh. The wetland data collected for the La Crosse River Valley Study shall be used to guide acquisition/easement priorities.
6. **Public Education.** The City shall develop and install signage to interpret wetland ecology along trail systems within City-owned parklands or adjacent to wetlands.

Woodland Resources

Wooded bluffs, Hixon Forest, and mature trees within the City provide wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities and aesthetic value. Preservation and enhancement of these resources are important elements for maintaining natural communities and quality of life for the citizens of La Crosse.

Objective 4: Protect Wooded Bluffs. Protect and enhance the quality of wooded uplands, particularly wooded bluffs.

The wooded bluffs located along the east side of La Crosse provide high quality habitat for wildlife and impressive scenery and recreational opportunities for the citizens of La Crosse. Preservation of these woodlands is essential to maintaining the ecological integrity of the Mississippi River corridor, as well as the character of the City.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Expand Hixon Forest.** The City shall work with La Crosse County, private-property owners and others (e.g., Mississippi Valley Conservancy) to purchase undeveloped land along the bluff, including the sloping face and a portion of the upland behind the bluff (east to the east boundary of the old County farm) to expand Hixon Forest (see Figure 3-1). Purchases should be prioritized according to natural resource quality and visual quality.
2. **Bluff Protection Area.** The City shall work with the County, private-property owners and others (e.g., Mississippi Valley Conservancy) to purchase land or easements along the entire bluff extending north and south of Hixon Forest to protect these areas from development (see “bluff protection area” on Figure 3-1).
3. **Scenic Resources.** To protect the natural and scenic qualities of the wooded coulee slopes, the City shall prohibit development on slopes greater than 20 percent, prohibit clear-cutting, and prohibit construction of roads or driveways longer than 200 feet on slopes that are steeper than 12 percent.



Granddad's Bluff – a prominent scenic resource in La Crosse

4. **Woodland Buffers.** The City shall require ten foot buffers between areas disturbed (e.g., graded) for new development and woodlands to minimize destruction or encroachment into the woodland edge. The buffer shall be maintained in a natural condition.
5. **Restoration/Enhancement.** The City shall maintain and enhance the quality of woodlands on City-owned property by monitoring for invasive species and disease.

Objective 5: Protect Woodlands and Trees. Maintain and protect mature trees within public properties, along public streets and on private property to enhance the urban forest and urban wildlife habitat. In addition, promote stewardship and woodlands.

Large mature trees in the City add value and character to neighborhoods and the City as a whole. Mature trees also provide valuable habitat for urban wildlife and songbirds. The extensive woodlands within Hixon Forest provide an opportunity to educate the general public about the ecological value of woodlands. Thus, it is important that woodlands and the urban forest, particularly mature trees, be preserved within the City of La Crosse.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Tree Ordinance.** The City shall develop a tree ordinance to encourage preservation of mature trees and mitigation for removal of such trees. Preference should be given to using native tree species in all landscape plans. This ordinance would apply to new development or redevelopment areas.
2. **Mature Tree Management.** On City-owned properties, the City shall monitor wooded areas with mature trees to identify disease and injury problems. Woodland management shall be coordinated with the WDNR.
3. **Woodland Interpretation.** The City shall continue to provide support for the Hixon Forest Nature Center to provide interpretative signage regarding trees and woodlands.

- 4. Public Participation.** The City shall support and foster volunteer tree monitoring groups, reforestation programs, and adopt-a-woodland programs to encourage public participation in protection, maintenance, and enhancement of area woodlands.



Mature street tree canopy

Wildlife Resources

The Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, La Crosse River marsh and wooded bluffslands provide large areas of high-quality habitat for wildlife. Each of these areas provides a wide variety of habitat types and corridor connections within the City. Preservation and enhancement of these areas is essential for maintaining the diversity of wildlife present in the City.

Objective 6: Habitat Fragmentation. Minimize potential for habitat fragmentation and habitat degradation.

In recent years, residential development has spread into the coulees. Widely dispersed developments tend to increase habitat fragmentation and can result in increased occurrences of nuisance animal problems.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Compact Development.** Reduce fragmentation of woodlands through concentrated development of services and residential housing in coulee areas. Development should only be allowed where City sewer and water can be provided to discourage dispersed, low-density development.
- 2. Habitat Restoration.** The City shall use native plantings to restore native vegetation habitat in City parks, the La Crosse River marsh, and Hixon Forest. The City shall encourage new development to include native plantings and permanent erosion control techniques that utilize vegetation rather than hardscapes. The City shall coordinate with

local conservation groups and other government agencies to promote habitat restoration and provide homeowners with information on native landscape design.

Objective 7: Wildlife Management. Improve management of wildlife on City-owned property.

Planting native vegetation that has edible seeds, berries and nuts can attract populations of songbirds and other urban wildlife. Small vegetated plots can also be planted and maintained in a natural condition to encourage the use by songbirds and butterflies.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Wildlife Food Plots.** The City shall explore opportunities to use wildlife friendly vegetation and install food plots (appropriate for urban settings) in City parks and open space. Food plots and feeders that encourage deer shall be discouraged, since this species can become a nuisance within an urban environment. Local neighborhood groups or conservation organizations could be invited to assist with installation and management of butterfly gardens and other native plantings.
2. **Park Planning.** The City shall develop and implement a natural resource management plan for City-owned parks and open space. Plans should be developed in coordination with the maintenance staff to ensure appropriate management and maintenance techniques are understood and used.



Natural area at Red Cloud Park

Objective 8: Wildlife Corridors. Maintain wildlife corridors and connections.

Many types of wildlife depend on continuous naturally vegetated corridors to move between major habitats. “Green” corridors can range in size from the La Crosse River marsh to tree and shrub plantings along roadways. Care should be taken to ensure that corridor connections remain intact when new areas are developed. This might involve careful site planning to maintain open space within a new subdivision that also serves as a wildlife corridor. In addition, redevelopment and road projects provide opportunities to develop

green corridors or connections that are wildlife friendly while adding character and aesthetic improvements within the City.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Green Corridors.** The City shall install landscaping in conjunction with road improvements in order to establish continuous vegetated corridors throughout the City. Such corridors should be designed in a manner that is consistent with concepts in the Urban Design and Parks and Open Space plan elements.
2. **New Development.** The City shall encourage the preservation of open space and wildlife corridors in new developments through the use of incentives and flexible regulations, such as land trusts, open space and cluster zoning, density bonuses, and conservation easements.

Objective 9: Protect Habitat. Avoid development impacts to habitat for federally threatened, endangered or state listed species and natural communities.

The Mississippi River, La Crosse River and oak woodlands provide habitat for a variety of federally listed and state listed sensitive plants and animals. Sensitive areas should be protected in accordance with federal and state regulations. Additionally, the presence of sensitive species provides an indicator of the ecological health of the local environment.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Species Identification.** The City shall work with the WDNR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to identify the locations where sensitive species occur within the City of La Crosse.
2. **Habitat Management Plans.** The City shall work with the WDNR and USFWS to development management plans to maintain habitat for sensitive species. The City shall coordinate land use and infrastructure plans to support species protection objectives. These agencies shall be encouraged to purchase specific sites that have high occurrence of sensitive species.



River backwaters provide rich wildlife habitat

Soil Resources

Soil resources within and adjacent to the City of La Crosse are as varied as the surrounding landscape. The floodplain soils along the rivers tend to be sandy with organic (marsh) soils in wetland areas. In contrast, the terrace and bluffland soils are finer textured, with moderate to steep slopes.

Objective 10: Minimize Erosion. Minimize erosion and degradation of soil resources.

Erosion control is an important element for maintaining the integrity of soils along rivers and on steep slopes. In addition to protecting the soil resource, erosion control protects water resources from elevated pollutant loads.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Development Regulations.** The City shall continue enforcing the current erosion control regulations as identified in the City Code (and incorporated in the Unified Development Ordinance). If necessary, to carry out development plan review and on-site erosion control inspections, the City shall consider adding staff.
- 2. Erosion Control Seminar.** The City, in cooperation with the County and other local governments, shall provide educational seminars for local developers regarding proper design and installation of erosion control practices. The seminar should be provided once per year, and should include discussion of construction sequencing and post construction maintenance.

Objective 11: Protect Steep Slopes. Strengthen development regulations to restrict buildings and roads on slopes greater than or equal to 20 percent.

Currently, the City identifies areas with slopes greater than 30 percent as “restricted development areas.” No land disturbance activities are allowed within ten feet of these areas, except for roads and utilities, if necessary, to access buildable sites. Restricting development on steep slopes is important in order to:

- Maintain the natural appearance of the bluff face and wooded coulee slopes
- Maintain the natural silhouette of the bluff line and coulee ridge lines
- Maintain natural vegetation to guard against slope erosion and minimize fragmentation of wildlife habitat and movement corridors.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Strengthen Development Controls.** The City shall protect steep coulee slopes and bluffs by amending its zoning and subdivision ordinance (or Unified Development Ordinance) to include the following conditions and standards:
 - a) Prohibit any development on sites with an average slope greater than 30 percent.
 - b) Prohibit construction of driveways longer than 200 feet on slopes greater than 18 percent and require that they be designed to follow natural contours.
 - c) Prohibit development within 60 feet of the bluff line or coulee ridge line and require 40 feet of this buffer area to remain in a natural conditions (i.e., no grading or removal of existing vegetation unless deemed diseased or invasive species).
 - d) Require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for development in areas with steep slopes.
 - e) Establish criteria or standards for approval of CUPs on steep slopes, potentially including:
 - Require lower density or larger lot sizes.
 - Establish a maximum impervious area.
 - Establish a maximum grading or land disturbance area relative to slope grade, where the amount of grading decreases as the slope increases.
 - Set a maximum amount of allowable tree or vegetation removal. (Note: Adopting a tree preservation ordinance is recommended in the *Natural Resources* plan element. Standards for tree removal on steep slopes could be more restrictive.)
 - Require use of earth toned building materials and prohibit use of reflective glass on buildings constructed on steep slopes.
 - Encourage use of “terrain-adaptive” architecture or require that buildings on steep slopes be sized and located to least disrupt the natural character of the hillside.
 - Limit structure height on steep slopes.
 - Prohibit any part of a building or structure (e.g. towers) from extending above the bluff line or coulee ridgeline silhouette.
 - Ensure, through building permit review, that the foundation and underlying material of any structure shall be adequate for the slope condition and soil type.
 - Ensure that the proposed development does not present any danger of falling rock, mud, uprooted trees, or other materials.
 - Ensure adequate provision for surface water runoff and temporary and permanent erosion and sedimentation control.
 - f) Establish definitions in the zoning and subdivision ordinance (or Unified Development Ordinance) related to development on steep slopes. Some items that should be defined include:
 - Steep slopes (i.e., slopes with grades 20-30 percent over a minimum horizontal distance of 50 feet)
 - Very steep slopes (i.e., slopes with grades over 30 percent)
 - Bluff and/or bluff face
 - Bluff line and coulee ridge line
 - Clear cutting and/or selective cutting

Intergovernmental Coordination

There are a variety of government agencies that have natural resource expertise, as well as being stakeholders in natural resource review. The USFWS manages the Refuge. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages the lock and dam system, floodplains and wetlands. The WDNR has expertise and review for wetlands, woodlands, endangered species, etc. In addition, La Crosse County and the adjacent cities and towns have management responsibilities for the natural resources within their jurisdictions.

Objective 12. Coordinate Protection Efforts. Coordinate natural resource efforts with appropriate local, state and federal agencies.

Most natural resources and related issues are not confined by jurisdictional boundaries. Thus, it is extremely important that local municipalities work with each other and with other regional and state governmental agencies to identify and solve natural resource issues and coordinate protection and enhancement efforts.

Policies/Actions:

1. Interagency Quarterly Meetings. The City shall meet quarterly with natural resource representatives from La Crosse County, adjacent towns and townships, the WDNR and USFWS, and others, as appropriate. The purpose of the meetings shall be to:

- Share information about projects that affect natural resources
- Coordinate and prioritize management efforts
- Identify funding sources (including grants)
- Develop joint management plans and natural resource goals for specific shared resources (e.g., Mississippi River, La Crosse Marsh, etc.)
- Determine responsibilities and capabilities for implementation of natural resource management plans

Implementation Program

This section describes the major actions involved in implementing the Natural Resources plan element. Table 3-1 is intended to guide City staff and the Common Council in setting priorities for capital budgeting and staff allocation. It is expected that this table will be reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, to establish new priorities.

Priority ranking is defined as follows:

- 1 = highest or short-term priority
- 2 = secondary or mid-term priority
- 3 = lowest priority or represents on-going activities

Table 3-1: Implementation Actions for Natural Resources

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	Surface Water Management Plan. Collaborate with other governmental entities in the area to develop and adopt a surface water management plan for the entire watershed. This plan would essentially be an extension of the Surface Water Management Plan required under Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit (see Public Utilities plan element)	City Council Public Works Department Water and Sewer Utility Planning Department
1	Development Standards and Review. Continue to enforce existing development regulations and adopt new regulations consistent with the BMPs described in Appendices A and B.	Planning Department City Council Plan Commission
1	Buffer Regulations. As part of the development review standards, adopt buffer requirements to protect wetland, riparian, and woodland resources.	Planning Department Plan Commission City Council
1	Bluff Protection. Work with La Crosse County, private property owners and others to acquire land and/or easements along the entire bluff and adjacent to Hixon Forest.	City Council Planning Department Parks Department Private property owners Conservation organizations
1	La Crosse River Marsh Open Space. Work with WDNR and conservation groups to identify and acquire land or easements to enlarge public open space around the La Crosse River marsh.	Planning Department Parks Department City Council Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Conservation organizations

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
2	Wellhead Protection. Implement the recommendations of the City’s <i>Wellhead Protection Plan</i> , including adoption of related zoning regulations and delineation of wellhead protection areas.	Planning Department Public Works Department Water and Sewer Utility City Council
2	Green Corridors. Establish continuous vegetated corridors in appropriate locations by installing additional landscaping in conjunction with road improvements. Priority should be given to roads identified as potential parkways in the Urban Design and Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan elements.	Planning Department Public Works Department Parks Department City Council
2	Tree Ordinance. Develop a tree ordinance to encourage preservation of mature trees that would apply to all new development or redevelopment areas.	Planning Department Plan Commission City Council
2	Natural Resource Management Plan. Implement a natural resources management plan for City owned parks and open space that provides property direction for management and maintenance of woodlands, habitat, and water resources.	Parks Department Planning Department City Council
3	Resource Restoration and Enhancement. Continue to explore opportunities to enhance and restore natural resources and habitat on City owned property.	Parks Department City Council Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
3	Invasive Species Control. Continue to monitor City owned property, including parks and open space, for the presence of invasive plant species and work the WDNR and others on specific management plans.	Parks Department City Council Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
3	Public Education and Participation. Continue to engage in efforts to engage the public and foster public knowledge regarding resource protection. Such efforts might include utility bill inserts, public seminars, brochures on a variety of topics, public tree planting events.	Parks Department Planning Department City Council
3	Inter-agency Meetings. Meet quarterly with natural resources representatives from La Crosse County, adjacent towns, WDNR, USFWS and others to share and coordinate natural resource data and management efforts.	Parks Department Planning Department La Crosse County Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Others

Appendix A

Water Quality Best Management Practices

The following techniques, sometimes known as best management practices (BMPs), should be used in conjunction with one another to improve treatment of water quality. All techniques have benefits but cannot do the entire job. Such systems may include multiple management options, ranging from street sweeping and structures to open space and litter control laws. Although storm water ponds and wetland treatment systems are most often the tools for treatment and storage of urban runoff, they are only some of the tools in this process. The list below describes several BMPs specific to different phases of construction. It also includes several BMPs related to public education and participation.

Determining the most appropriate BMPs to use in any situation should be based on achieving the following priorities:

1. Avoid adverse impacts.
2. Minimize unavoidable adverse impacts.
3. Mitigate unavoidable adverse impacts

Construction Site Surface Water Management

Runoff Control

- Minimize Clearing
- Preserve Natural Vegetation
- Install Construction Entrance (i.e., gravel area at site entrance)
- Stabilize Drainageways

Sediment Control

- Install Perimeter Controls (e.g., silt fence)
- Storm Drain Inlet Protection
- Install Sediment Trapping Devices
- Stabilize Exposed Soils
- Protect Steep Slopes
- Protect Waterways
- Phase Construction

Good Housekeeping

- Spill Prevention and Control Plan
- Designated Vehicle Maintenance and Washing Areas
- Contractor Certification and Inspector Training
- BMP Inspection and Maintenance

Post-Construction Surface Water Management

Structural BMPs

- Wet or Dry Extended Detention Ponds
- Infiltration Basin or Trench
- Porous Pavement
- Bioretention
- Sand and Organic Filters
- Grassed Swales
- Grassed Filter Strip
- In-line Sediment Traps or Storage
- Skimmer and separators
- Filtration Catch Basins/Manholes

Nonstructural BMPs

- Alum Injection (removes suspended sediments)
- Buffer Zones
- Conservation Easements
- Open Space Design
- Narrower Residential Streets
- Eliminating Curb and Gutter
- Comprehensive Storm Water Management Plans
- Erosion-control Ordinances
- Pet Ordinances
- Fertilizer and Pesticide Controls or Ordinances
- BMP Inspection and Maintenance

Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

Source Controls

- Vehicle Washing
- Landscaping and Lawn Care
- Parking Lot and Street Cleaning
- Storm Drain System Cleaning
- Monitoring programs
- Spill response and prevention

Materials Management

- Hazardous Materials Storage
- Road Salt Application and Storage
- Used Oil Recycling
- Deicing Fluid Recovery

Illicit Discharge Detection & Elimination

- Failing Septic Systems
- Industrial/Business Connections

- Recreational Sewage
- Sanitary Sewer Overflows
- Identify Illicit Connections
- Wastewater Connections to the Storm Drain System
- Illegal Dumping

Public Education & Outreach

Information Topics

- Use Environmentally Friendly Landscape Techniques
- Water Conservation Measures
- Proper Hazardous Household Waste Disposal
- Proper Pet Waste Disposal
- Recycling and Waste Disposal
- Erosion Control Measures
- Illicit Dumping and Littering
- Source Reduction
- Energy Recovery
- Low Impact Design Techniques

Outreach Techniques

- Educational Displays, Pamphlets, Booklets and Utility Stuffers
- Promotional Giveaways
- Classroom Education

Public Involvement & Participation

Activities/Public Participation

- Storm Drain Stenciling
- Stream Cleanup & Monitoring
- Volunteer Monitoring
- Reforestation Programs
- Wetland Plantings
- Adopt-A-Stream Program
- Awards and Public Recognition Program

Involvement/Public Opinion

- Watershed Organization
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Attitude Surveys
- Community Hotlines

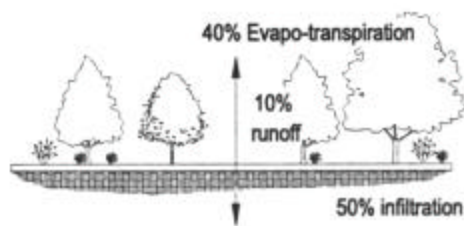
Appendix B

Low Impact Development and Conservation Design Techniques

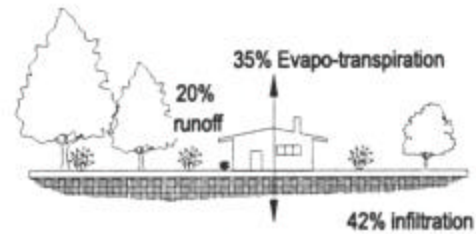
Certain methods can be used to mimic the predevelopment site hydrology and watershed’s natural hydrologic function. The following techniques may be used to reduce water runoff and boost groundwater recharge by creating a balance between runoff, infiltration, storage, groundwater recharge and evapotranspiration. With this approach, receiving waters may experience fewer negative impacts in the volume, frequency and quality of water runoff so as to maintain base flows and more closely approximate predevelopment runoff conditions. The following list is comprehensive but may not be complete.

Limit impervious surfaces created by driveways.

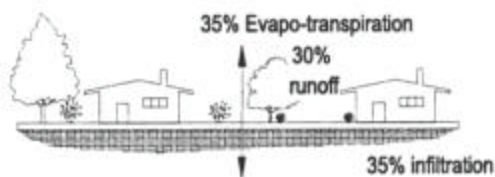
- Create natural resource areas.
- Minimize disturbance and compaction to site, then loosen soils after construction is complete. Preserve infiltratable soils.
- Preserve natural depression areas and topography.
- Use vegetated swales, on-site bio-retention, wider and flatter swales, maintain sheet flow, and clusters of trees and shrubs in flow path.
- Maximize tree preservation or forestation.
- Use native vegetation that have deeper roots, more water uptake, or better water evapo-transpiration.
- Minimize storm drainpipes.
- Use filter and buffer strips, swales: grass, and infiltration trenches.



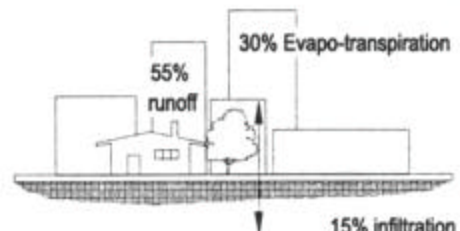
Natural Ground Cover



10-20% Impervious Surface



35-50% Impervious Surface



75-100% Impervious Surface

Appendix C

List of Native Species for Restoration Projects in La Crosse

Xeric Prairie Mix (Appropriate for the Bluff Tops)

Grasses	
Sideoats Grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>
Blue Grama	<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>
Plains Oval Sedge	<i>Carex brevior</i>
Silky Wild Rye	<i>Elymus villosus</i>
Bottlebrush Grass	<i>Hystrix patula</i>
June Grass	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>
Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>
Prairie Dropseed	<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>
Forbs	
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
Leadplant	<i>Amorpha canescens</i>
Butterfly Weed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>
Heath Aster	<i>Aster ericoides</i>
Azure Aster	<i>Aster oolentangiensis</i>
Silky Aster	<i>Aster sericeus</i>
Arrow-leaved Aster	<i>Aster urophyllus</i>
Stiff tickseed	<i>Coreopsis palmata</i>
Golden Aster	<i>Heterotheca villosa</i>
Bush Clover	<i>Lespedeza capitata</i>
White Prairie Clover	<i>Petalostemum candidum</i>
Purple Prairie Clover	<i>Petalostemum purpureum</i>
Prairie Rose	<i>Rosa arkansana</i>
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>
Gray Goldenrod	<i>Solidago nemoralis</i>
Upland Goldenrod	<i>Solidago ptarmicoides</i>
Stiff Goldenrod	<i>Solidago rigida</i>
Showy Goldenrod	<i>Solidago speciosa</i>
Hoary Vervain	<i>Verbena stricta</i>
Golden Alexanders	<i>Zizia aurea</i>

Savanna/Woodland Edge Grass Mix

Grasses	
Big Bluestem	<i>Andropogon gerardi</i>
Side-oats Grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>
Hairy Wood Chess	<i>Bromus purgans</i>
Canada Wild Rye	<i>Elymus canadensis</i>
Bottle Brush Grass	<i>Elymus hystrix</i>
Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>
Forbs	
Fragrant Giant Hyssop	<i>Agastache foeniculum</i>
Butterfly Milkweed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>
Sky Blue Aster	<i>Aster laevis</i>
Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpureum</i>
White Snakeroot	<i>Eupatorium rugosum</i>
Wild Lupine	<i>Lupinus perennis</i>
Wild Bergamot	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>
Wood Betony	<i>Pedicularis canadensis</i>
Purple Prairie Clover	<i>Petalostemum purpureum</i>
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>
Brown-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia triloba</i>
Stiff Goldenrod	<i>Solidago rigida</i>
Showy Goldenrod	<i>Solidago speciosa</i>
Hoary Vervain	<i>Verbena stricta</i>
Golden Alexanders	<i>Zizia aurea</i>

Pond Edge/Wetland Woody Plant Species

Trees	
Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>
Green Ash	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>
Cottonwood	<i>Populus deltoides</i>
Swamp White Oak	<i>Quercus bicolor</i>
Black Willow	<i>Salix nigra</i>
Shrubs	
Glossy Black Chokeberry	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>
Red-Twigged Dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>
Winterberry	<i>Gaultheria procubens</i>
Red-Berried Elder	<i>Sambucus pubens</i>
American Highbush Cranberry	<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>
Buttonbush	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>
Pussy Willow	<i>Salix discolor</i>
Sandbar Willow	<i>Salix (interior) exigua</i>
Red Willow	<i>Salix sericea</i>
Bebb's or Beaked Willow	<i>Salix bebbiana</i>

Wet Meadow Plant Mix

Grass-like Plants	
Fringed Brome	<i>Bromus ciliatus</i>
Blue Joint Grass	<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i>
Bottlebrush Sedge	<i>Carex comosa</i>
Porcupine Sedge	<i>Carex hystericina</i>
Awl-fruited Sedge	<i>Carex stipata</i>
Fox Sedge	<i>Carex vulpinoidea</i>
Giant Manna Grass	<i>Glyceria grandis</i>
Fowl Manna Grass	<i>Glyceria striata</i>
Bottlebrush Grass	<i>Hystrix patula</i>
Common Rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>
Green Bulrush	<i>Scirpus atrovirens</i>
Woolgrass	<i>Scirpus cyperinus</i>
River Bulrush	<i>Scirpus fluviatilis</i>
Prairie Cord Grass	<i>Spartina pectinata</i>
Forbs	
Marsh Milkweed	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>
Smooth Blue Aster	<i>Aster laevis</i>
New England Aster	<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>
Red-stalked Aster	<i>Aster punecius</i>
Flat-topped Aster	<i>Aster umbellatus</i>
Spotted Joe Pye Weed	<i>Eupatorium maculatum</i>
Boneset	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>
Sneezeweed	<i>Helenium autumnale</i>
Maxamillian Sunflower	<i>Helianthus maximilani</i>
Great St. John’s Wort	<i>Hypericum pyramidatum</i>
Blue Flag Iris	<i>Iris versicolor</i>
Tall Blazing Star	<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>
Cardinal Flower	<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>
Blue Lobelia	<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>
Monkey Flower	<i>Mimulus ringens</i>
Marsh Betony	<i>Pedicularis lanceolata</i>
Mountain Mint	<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>
Green-headed Coneflower	<i>Rudbeckia laciniatum</i>
Grass-leaved Goldenrod	<i>Solidago graminifolia</i>
Tall Meadow Rue	<i>Thalictrum dasycarpum</i>
Blue Vervain	<i>Verbena hastata</i>
Ironweed	<i>Veronia fasciculata</i>
Culver’s Root	<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>

Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

4.0 Land Use Plan Element

URS

Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF ISSUES	1
GROWTH AND REDEVELOPMENT	1
NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION.....	2
IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY.....	2
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	3
GUIDANCE FROM THE CONCEPT PLAN	4
BUILD ON EXISTING ASSETS	4
COMPACT AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH.....	4
OVERVIEW OF LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN.....	6
SUMMARY OF LAND USE OBJECTIVES	6
Growth and Redevelopment.....	6
Neighborhood Stabilization.....	7
Improve Environmental Quality	7
Plan Implementation.....	7
PLANNED PATTERN OF LAND USE	9
Land Use Categories	9
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	17
GROWTH AND REDEVELOPMENT	17
NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION.....	33
IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY.....	41
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	51

List of Figures

Figure 4-1 Future Land Use Map	13
Figure 4-2 Revitalization Areas	19
Figure 4-3 Urban Expansion Areas	27
Figure 4-4 Major Institutions.....	37
Figure 4-5 Sensitive Natural Resources.....	43

List of Tables

Table 4-1: Future Land Use Categories.....	9
Table 4-2: Zoning Categories per Draft Unified Development Ordinance.....	12
Table 4-3: Planned Land Use Category	15

Table 4-4: Estimated Land Needed to Accommodate Projected Growth in the City
of La Crosse, 2000-2020 16
Table 4-5: Forecast Land Needs in Five Year Increments, 2000-2020 17
Table 4-6: Implementation Actions for Land Use 55

Appendices

Appendix A Land Use Categories

Appendix B Low Impact Development and Conservation Design Techniques

Land Use Plan Element

This plan element describes a framework to guide land use and development decisions over the next 10 to 20 years. To capture projected growth in population, households and employment, La Crosse will need to overcome challenges presented by a limited land supply and development trends that are attracting growth to areas beyond the City limits. To do that, La Crosse will need to focus on:

- Improving the quality of older areas through maintenance and redevelopment;
- Leveraging its natural and cultural resources to foster economic development and enhance quality of life; and
- Creating attractive new neighborhoods

Because of the limited supply of vacant land, most development in La Crosse over the next 10 to 20 years will occur through redevelopment of older industrial properties (primarily along the riverfront), in-fill development in established neighborhoods, and strategic development on the City's fringe. Opportunities for intensification and mixing of land uses will likely be concentrated near key activity centers, such as around the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, and along major commercial corridors.

This Land Use plan element outlines strategies to direct new growth and redevelopment to revitalize established areas and provide for logical and environmentally sensitive expansion into areas beyond the current City limits. The objectives and actions outlined in this element respond to the analysis of issues regarding land use and development in La Crosse and are guided by priorities established in the Concept Plan.

Summary of Issues

La Crosse is essentially fully developed. One of the primary challenges facing La Crosse is how to accommodate future growth, given the limited supply of land remaining for development. It will be essential to explore and act on opportunities to redevelop prime sites along the riverfront and to enhance the quality of existing neighborhoods. The Issues and Conditions report identified the key issues and challenges La Crosse faces. These are summarized below:

Growth and Redevelopment

Because La Crosse is nearly fully developed, opportunities for new development will primarily result from redevelopment. Capturing some of the region's new development is essential to increase the City's tax base. Faced with competition for new development from

surrounding communities, particularly Onalaska, the City will need to accentuate its unique assets and provide incentives to attract new development. At the same time, the City must continue to explore opportunities to expand its boundaries, particularly to provide for new housing development.

- What should the balance be between planning for fringe development versus neighborhood revitalization or redevelopment?
- How proactive should the City be in encouraging redevelopment and providing incentives to encourage investment in La Crosse?
- To what extent should the City pursue annexation of surrounding township property to accommodate new growth? What, if any, incentives should the City provide to encourage annexation?

Neighborhood Stabilization

La Crosse is a relatively old city and while many of its neighborhoods are attractive, there are areas where age, inadequate maintenance, and incompatible land uses are eroding the sense of neighborhood stability. These factors can “push” people to relocate their residence or businesses outside La Crosse. To give people and businesses incentives to stay and reinvest in La Crosse neighborhoods, a commitment must be made to proactively respond to the opportunities and challenges facing neighborhoods.

- Do existing neighborhoods provide an appropriate mix and balance of housing types, and land uses (e.g., residential, shops, offices, parks, schools)?
- What can the City do to ensure that new development is compatible with and enhances the character and livability of established neighborhoods?
- How can the City accommodate the continuing growth needs of the major institutions such as the hospitals and colleges without diminishing neighborhood character?
- What can the City do to improve property maintenance and the appearance of older neighborhoods?

Improvement of Environmental Quality

The development pattern of La Crosse has been shaped, to a large extent by the significant natural features in the area – primarily the Mississippi River, the La Crosse River and Marsh, and the bluffs. These natural features are highly valued by the community and contribute greatly to the image and character of the City.

- What are appropriate riverfront land uses? How proactive should the City be in removing or relocating riverfront businesses that are not river-dependent?
- To what extent, if at all, should the City expend funds to help cover costs related to pollution clean up, land assembly or access improvements to stimulate redevelopment of brownfield properties?
- What should be the balance between public access and private control of property along the riverfront and the bluffs?

- To what extent should the new development be restricted in order to protect steep slopes, significant vegetation and woodlands, wetlands, and prime agricultural land?

Plan Implementation

Realizing the goals and priorities defined in this, and other chapters of *Confluence* will require adequate resources in terms of tools (e.g., ordinances, financing) and staff to carry out the recommended actions. It is also important to coordinate planning efforts with surrounding communities. This is not only because regional coordination is required by Wisconsin Smart Growth Law, but it is also essential to achieve a region-wide development pattern that is both effective and sustainable.

- What, if anything, should be done to improve communication and cooperation between the City and surrounding cities and townships regarding development, provision of public services, and annexation?
- Where do the interests of the City, County, and Townships converge? Is there common ground upon which regional cooperation regarding planning and development can be built?
- Do the City's existing development regulations provide effective protection of natural resources and neighborhood character, and guard against incompatible land uses?



Traditional grid pattern of streets in La Crosse

Guidance from the Concept Plan

The Concept Plan places a priority on neighborhood revitalization and achieving a future development pattern that is environmentally sustainable, physically attractive, and fiscally responsible. To do that, the City will need to build on its assets – its attractive physical features, charming traditional neighborhoods, a revitalized downtown, and existing public facilities and services. It will also need to encourage compact and strategic growth on its fringe. The Concept Plan outlines several overarching goals regarding land use and development. These include:

Building Existing Assets

- **Redevelopment and Reinvestment:** Public policy should guide and redirect market forces to infill and redevelopment locations. A high priority should be placed on creating incentives to stimulate private reinvestment in redevelopment, infill and pollution clean-up, particularly in locations on the riverfront, in distressed neighborhoods and in key activity centers.
- **Neighborhoods:** Existing neighborhoods and activity centers within the City should be the focus for the majority of, but not all, new growth. Reinvestment needs within existing City neighborhoods should be given priority over new land development and fringe growth.
- **Downtown:** Downtown La Crosse should continue to be the priority focus of revitalization efforts with a strong emphasis on historic preservation. Downtown should also continue to function as the regional center for office, government, and entertainment. Emphasis should be on vertically mixed development, creating an attractive pedestrian environment, increased housing, day and night activities, river access and intensified land uses. Downtown should be enhanced by strengthening connections to the riverfront and surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Riverfront:** The City should take a proactive approach to the redevelopment and clean-up of riverfront property to accommodate a mixture of housing, office, hotel and technology-oriented land uses. Existing riverfront parks should be linked. An emphasis should be placed on the extension of parks and open space along the river to the north and south and strengthening connections to the central business district.

Compact and Sustainable Growth

- **Annexation:** The City should pursue annexation of fringe areas currently served by public utilities and roads and other areas within the Sewer Service Area. The entire Town of Campbell should eventually be annexed to the City of La Crosse. The City should pursue the eventual annexation of the Towns of Medary and Shelby. The City should continue to abide by a firm policy to not extend sewer or water services without annexation.

- **Expansion after 2020:** After 2020, the City should evaluate and possibly propose extending sewer and water services into the Town of Barre and the Town of Hamilton south of Interstate-90 (I-90) in the vicinity of County Roads B, O, M and OA, annexing those lands, providing additional municipal services and facilities (e.g., fire protection, parks) and buying the two private treatment plants there.
- **Growth:** The City should strive to increase the population and number of households within its municipal boundaries, but not at the expense of sacrificing neighborhood revitalization or prime natural resources. The City should work cooperatively with La Crosse County and the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, to encourage Shelby, Medary, Barre and Hamilton Townships to slow the growth of housing in unserved areas by adopting strong land development controls.



The La Crosse River Valley Marsh is a valued natural asset and should be protected from development impacts

Overview of Land Use and Development Plan

This plan element describes a desired pattern of land use and actions the City may take to achieve it. It also expresses ideas from other plan chapters as they relate to land use. Nearly all of the fourteen plan elements that comprise *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan*, are related to the land use plan element, as most have a geographic component. Consequently, there is some overlap, and other plan elements provide more detail on certain subjects mentioned in this plan element. Other plan elements that provide significant direction to land use, development and design include:

- Neighborhood and Housing
- Urban Design
- Heritage Preservation
- Transportation
- Public Utilities
- Natural Resources
- Parks and Open Space

Those plan elements will be referenced periodically in the following text and should be consulted for further detail on certain topics.

Summary of Land Use Objectives

The objectives of the Land Use plan element are summarized below:

Growth and Redevelopment

Objective 1: Implement Future Land Use Map. Regulate land use consistently with the Future Land Use Map and the objectives in the Land Use plan element.

Objective 2: Targeted Redevelopment. Give redevelopment and reinvestment priority to locations on the riverfront, in distressed neighborhoods and key activity centers.

Objective 3: Compact and Contiguous Growth. Accommodate new development on the City's fringe in areas contiguous to existing developed areas of La Crosse that allow efficient extension of public services and roads and have minimal impact to sensitive environmental resources.

Objective 4: Downtown Revitalization. Strengthen the role of downtown La Crosse as the economic, civic and entertainment heart of the region through continued support of downtown revitalization efforts.

Objective 5: New Neighborhoods. Plan new neighborhoods comprehensively to include a wide variety of housing options, support retail and services businesses, and interconnected networks of roads and pedestrian facilities.

Objective 6: Enhance Commercial Corridors. Enhance major commercial corridors by improving the design and appearance of these corridors and by planning adjacent land uses in a manner supportive of the functional classification of the road.

Neighborhood Stabilization

Objective 7: Improve Land Use Compatibility. Minimize or eliminate land use conflicts in established neighborhoods through redevelopment of blighted, vacant or underutilized properties, enhanced buffering and screening, and improved building design.

Objective 8: Maintain Traditional Urban Character. Support and foster public and private efforts to maintain the traditional character in established neighborhoods through sensitive design and rehabilitation of buildings, the provision of mixed use areas, and careful attention to public infrastructure improvements, such as streetscaping.

Objective 9: Major Institutions. Provide for institutional growth while protecting the character and integrity of surrounding neighborhoods.

Objective 10: Stem Property Deterioration. Foster private maintenance and investment to ensure that established neighborhoods remain attractive, safe and comfortable places to live through coordinated public sector actions and incentives.

Improvement of Environmental Quality

Objective 11: Resource Protection. Safeguard and improve environmental features as a means of promoting sustainable urban development, revitalization and quality of life.

Objective 12: Brownfields. Restore underutilized urban and riverfront properties to viable commercial, residential, or recreational uses.

Objective 13: Enhance Riverfront. Capitalize on opportunities to develop more parks, housing, and offices along the riverfront while continuing to accommodate river-dependent industries.

Objective 14: Urban Ecology. Establish a balance between the built and natural environment that embraces the natural features of La Crosse and provides a context for restoration of degraded properties.

Plan Implementation

Objective 15: Regional Coordination. Build regional land use planning relationships that help support coordinated and sustainable growth in La Crosse and the entire Coulee Region.

Objective 16: Implementation Tools. Develop and maintain planning and regulatory tools (e.g., zoning ordinance) consistent with the policies outlined in this plan.

Objective 17: Planning and Regulatory Process. Establish and maintain an open, fair planning and regulatory process that is consistent with other jurisdictions (county, state, federal). Use this plan, in conjunction with other regulatory tools, as a basis for reviewing development applications and as a guide for neighborhood or district plans.

Objective 18: Local and Regional Investments. Invest in public facilities in a manner that maximizes their impacts, minimizes duplication and advances the objectives of this plan.



Capitalizing on existing assets, such as traditional housing, through neighborhood revitalization is a primary goal of *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan*

Planned Pattern of Land Use

A proposed pattern of future land use for La Crosse and the adjacent coulee area is illustrated by Figure 4-1 Future Land Use Map. This pattern is based on the preceding objectives and the priorities established in the Concept Plan. The pattern is generalized, and not exact; it should be used by City staff and officials to adjust zoning maps and to guide recommendations and decisions on rezoning and development requests. The future land use map should be used in conjunction with the goals, objectives, actions, and policies described in this plan element, and other elements of *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan*, as well as strategies defined in neighborhood plans and other planning efforts.

Land Use Categories

The proposed future land use pattern is comprised of seventeen land use categories, which are described in detail in Table 4-1. The categories provide for a mix of uses in some areas to better reflect the current land use pattern in established parts of the City. These categories provide a guide for the type of development and zoning that should occur in any area. However, specific development requirements are described and regulated by the zoning ordinance and official zoning map, which are the primary implementation tools of the Land Use Plan. Like the official zoning map, the future land use map will be formally adopted by the City in conjunction with adoption of *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan*. Appendix A provides a more detailed description of each land use category and criteria to evaluate the appropriateness of specific uses and zoning relative to each land use category.

Table 4-1 : Future Land Use Categories

Land Use Category	Description	Corresponding Zoning Districts*
Fringe Residential Housing (FRH)	The Fringe Residential Housing category provides for compact and environmentally sensitive residential development in the coulee areas. All development would be fully served by city utilities. The density is expected to be less than 4 housing units per net acre. However, higher density and mixed use development may be allowed through a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Areas not served by public utilities should be very low density with a maximum of one dwelling per 35 acres.	R-1 R-CL PUD
Single Family Housing (SF)	The Single Family Housing category provides for areas dominated by single family housing. It also allows for neighborhood public and institutional uses such as churches, schools and parks.	R-CL R-1 PUD
Low and Medium Density Housing (L/MR)	This category includes single- and two-family housing plus carefully integrated townhouses or other housing forms with individual outdoor entrances. Multiple unit buildings should not have more than 6 housing units per building. The density is expected to be not more than 10 housing units per net acre. Mixed use development may be allowed through a PUD in locations at intersections or along busier roads.	R-CL R-2 R-3 R-4 PUD

Land Use Category	Description	Corresponding Zoning Districts*
Medium and High Density Housing (M/HR)	Townhouses and all forms of apartment buildings are included in this category. This land use is generally located where there is good traffic access and at high-amenity or high-activity locations, such as near parks and major institutions. This land use may also function as a buffer between Low-Density Housing and non-residential land uses. The density is expected to be greater than 10 housing units per net acre. Mixed use development may be allowed through a PUD.	R-4 R-5 R-6 PUD
Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)	This category includes a variety of housing unit types and densities, along with small-scale retail and service businesses. Some buildings may have both businesses and housing units. Buildings are set close to the sidewalk with parking is located behind buildings. Streets are narrow and include sidewalks and boulevard trees. Parks and other public spaces are integrated with other land uses. This land use encompasses existing traditional neighborhoods and high-amenity or high-activity locations such as near downtown and major institutions. The density is expected to be greater than 4 housing units per net acre and will include a mix of single and multi-family housing.	Traditional Neighborhood Development [new] PUD
Medium Intensity Retail, Office or Housing (MRO)	This mixed category provides for a variety of commercial and/or medium-density housing located at major intersections and along major road corridors. Housing may be combined in the same building or closely integrated on the same site with retail or office space. The density of housing in this category is expected to be greater than 8 housing units per net acre.	R-4 R-5 R-6 NB LB CB PUD
High Intensity Retail, Office or Housing (HRO)	This category is similar to the Medium Intensity Retail, Office and Housing category except that the density and intensity of land development are expected to be greater. The density of housing in this category is expected to be greater than 10 housing units per net acre. It allows for mixed- and multiple-land uses, with major consideration given to creating attractive pedestrian spaces and streetscapes, and shared or public open spaces.	R-5 R-6 LB CB C PUD
Downtown (DT)	This land use category allows and promotes high-intensity office, retail, housing, entertainment, convention and public land uses, preferably in mixed-use buildings. High priority is placed on providing attractive public amenities with strong pedestrian orientations. The density of housing in this category is expected to be greater than 15 housing units per net acre.	R-5 R-6 CB C L1 PUD
Commercial (C)	This category provides for a variety of retail trade or services. It encompasses areas dominated by existing commercial uses and areas with access to major road corridors.	LB CB C PUD

Land Use Category	Description	Corresponding Zoning Districts*
Business Park (BP)	This land use category provides for office-showroom and light industrial buildings in landscaped “campus” settings with well-screened truck docks and no outdoor storage. Offices are allowed only in conjunction with other light industrial activities such as manufacturing. Pure office buildings should only be located in the downtown or at select major intersections. This category is intended to be a more attractive alternative to conventional light industrial areas.	C LI PUD
Light Industry (LI)	This category provides for a variety of manufacturing, assembly, and warehousing activities. Offices are allowed only as a secondary or support use to other light industrial activities.	LI PUD
General Industry (GI)	This category includes industry that involves railroad service, heavy truck traffic, extensive outdoor storage, noise or odors, and the handling of raw materials. It also includes railroad yards, outdoor truck parking, power plants and sewage treatment plants.	GI PUD
Public and Semi-Public Facilities (PF)	This category includes public and private schools, colleges, and public facilities, such as libraries, fire stations, churches and cemeteries.	All residential PS
Park and Conservancy (PK)	This category includes public parks and other lands owned by the public for outdoor recreation or natural resource protection, including Hixon Forest and public golf courses.	PS Conservancy
Wooded and Steep Slopes (WS)	This category includes private property that is undeveloped and reserved for open space through public easements or development restrictions due to steep slopes and woodlands. It includes areas such as the bluffs and privately-owned golf courses.	All residential PS Conservancy
Wetland and Floodplain (WF)	This category includes public or private land determined to be a wetland or floodplain under the state or federal regulations and protected from development.	Conservancy SW (Shoreland-Wetland District) FW (Floodway District) FS-Overlay FF-Overlay FSD-Overlay FPC-Overlay
Agricultural and Rural Residential (A)	This category provides for retention of active farming and preservation of rural character. Housing is allowed at a density of not greater than one house per 35 acres.	R-AG County Zoning: Exclusive Ag Agricultural “A” Agricultural “B” Transitional Agriculture

*** Note: The zoning categories reflect new categories in the City’s Draft Unified Development Ordinance, except as noted for County Zoning.**

Table 4-2: Zoning Categories per Draft Unified Development Ordinance

Zoning Key	Zoning Classification Name
R-AG	Residential Agricultural
R-1	Single-Family Residential
R-CL	Compact Lot Residential
R-2	Two-Family Residential
R-3	Very Low-Density Multi-Family Residential
R-4	Low-Density Multi-Family Residential
R-5	Moderate-Density Multi-Family Residential
R-6	High-Density Multi-Family Residential
NB	Neighborhood Business
LB	Limited Business
CB	Community Business
C	Commercial
LI	Limited Industrial
GI	General Industrial
PS	Public and Semi-Public
PUD	Planned Unit Development
SW	Shoreland-Wetland
FW	Floodway
FS-O	Flood Storage Overlay
FF-O	Regional Flood Fringe Overlay
FSD-O	Shallow Depth Floodplain Overlay
FPC-O	Pammel Creek Flood Fringe Overlay

Land Needs

The City of La Crosse is nearly fully developed, with approximately 99 percent of its entire land area developed. To accommodate new development, the City will need to “find” more land. Historically, the City has grown by annexing land from abutting townships. However, State legislation makes annexation difficult for cities to initiate. In addition, steep slopes in the outlying coulees make utility extensions more complicated and expensive. Consequently, the potential to add much land area through annexation may be limited.

Other means to accommodating new growth include redevelopment and, on a smaller scale, infill development of property within the current City limits. While these options present their own difficulties, such as relocation of existing property owners, building demolition, and pollution clean-up, they offer the greatest potential for “finding” land for new development in the City.

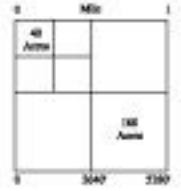
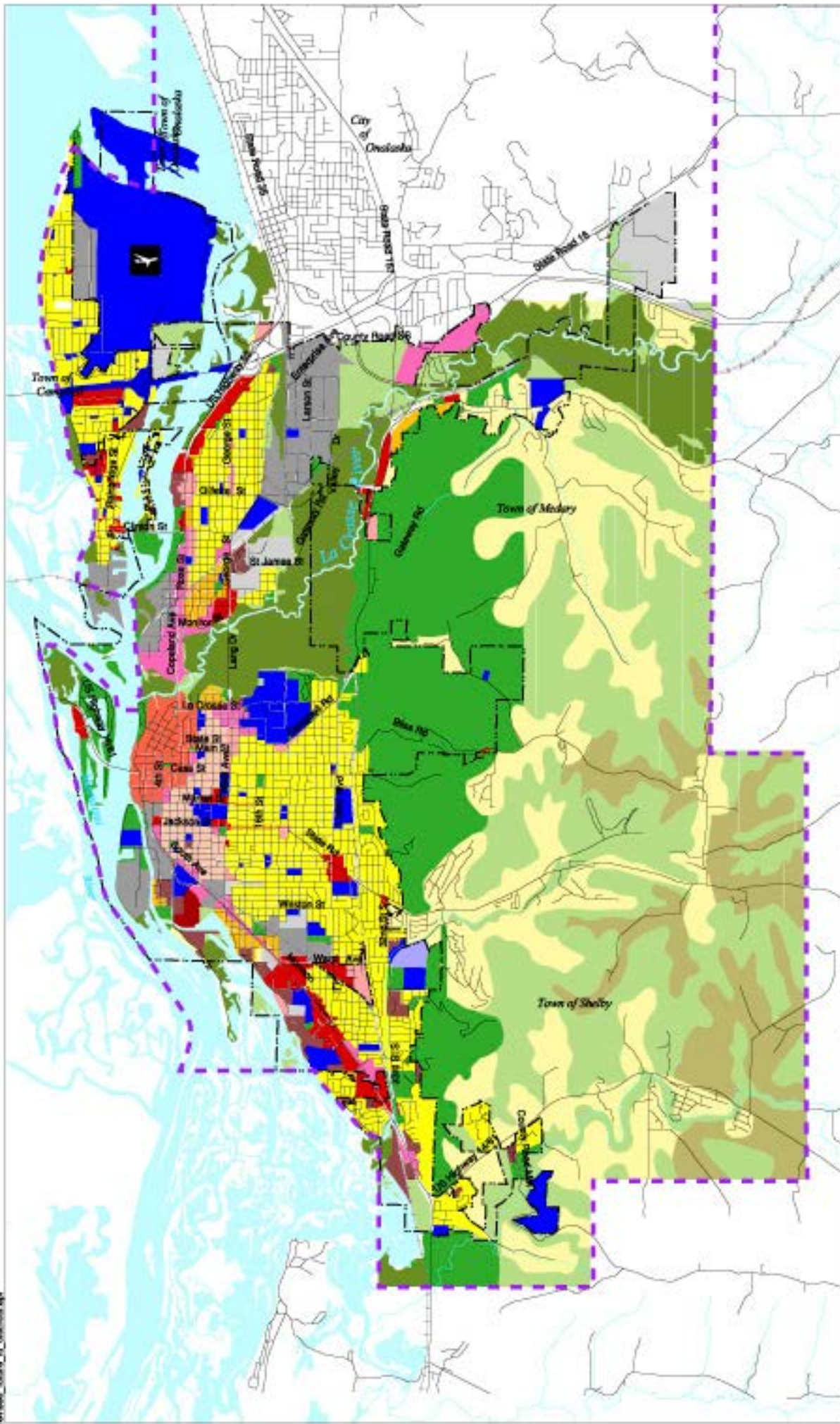
Population and Employment Growth. According to population and employment projections prepared by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, the City’s population is expected to increase by slightly more than 3,000 people and new employment in the City is expected to increase by 4,200 jobs by 2020. The Issues and Conditions report provides additional information regarding the projections and findings of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L) study.

Land Needed to Accommodate Projected Growth. Based on certain assumptions about future growth, it is anticipated that 493 acres of land is needed to accommodate

Figure 4-1

**Future
Land Use**

-  Fringe Residential Housing
-  Single Family Housing
-  Low / Medium Density Housing
-  Medium / High Density Housing
-  Traditional Neighborhood Development
-  Medium Intensity Retail, Office or Housing
-  High Intensity Retail, Office or Housing
-  Commercial
-  Downtown
-  Business Park
-  Light Industry
-  General Industry
-  Public and Semi-Public
-  Parks & Conservancy
-  Wooded and/or Steep Slope
-  Agricultural / Rural Residential
-  Wetland
-  Floodplain
-  Water
-  Sanitary Sewer Boundary



**City of
La Crosse
Comprehensive
Plan**

projected new growth in population and employment. Table 4-3 describes the amount of land allocated by planned future land use type. Table 4-4 indicates the amount of additional acreage needed for general land uses and is followed by a description of the growth assumptions.

As noted above, redevelopment and infill development on vacant and under-utilized property within La Crosse will account for some of the anticipated growth. While the City has identified some specific areas for redevelopment (e.g., Mobil Oil site) it is difficult to identify all the potential properties that may become available for redevelopment over the next decade or two. Many infill opportunities will be identified through the City’s on-going neighborhood planning process, which can focus on very specific properties. Similarly, over the next 20 years, the City may annex land on its fringe that will absorb some of the anticipated residential growth.

The *La Crosse Sewer Service Area Water Quality Management Plan 1995-2020* estimates that 6,620 acres of vacant developable land are available for new development within the entire sewer service area, which generally encompasses La Crosse, Onalaska and Shelby, Medary, Campbell, and Onalaska townships. The sewer plan concludes that there is adequate land available to accommodate the projected increase in population of slightly more than 12,000 people within the sewer service area over the next 20 years. The population projection is based on the UW-L study cited above, and includes the projected increase of 3,000 people in the City of La Crosse.

Table 4-3 : Planned Land Use Category

Land Use Category	Acres (approximate)	% of Total Acres*
Fringe Residential Housing (FRH)	5,383	13.6
Single Family Housing (SF)	1,737	4.5
Low/Medium Density Housing (L/MR)	193	0.6
Medium/High Density Housing (M/HR)	314	0.9
Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)	201	0.7
Medium Intensity Retail, Office, or Housing (MRO)	159	0.4
High Intensity Retail, Office, or Housing (HRO)	560	1.4
Commercial (C)	402	1.0
Downtown (DT)	258	0.6
Business Park (BP)	45	0.1
Light Industry (LI)	558	1.4
General Industry (GI)	972	2.4
Public and Semi-Public (P/SP)	2,236	5.6
Parks and Conservancy (PK)	5,904	14.9
Wooded and/or Steep Slopes (WS)	10,897	27.4
Wetlands (W)	3,188	8.0
Agricultural/Rural Residential (A) – outside City	6,560	16.5

Source: Based on Future Land Use Map

* Total acres also includes 156 acres devoted to public right-of-way

Table 4-4 : Estimated Land Needed to Accommodate Projected Growth in the City of La Crosse, 2000-2020

Land Use	Growth 2000-2020		Acres Needed*
	Population	Employment	
Residential			
• Low density	2,043		240
• Medium/High density	1,252		77
Office/Service		1,697	33
Industrial		1,697	78
Retail		848	65
Total	3,295	4,242	493

Source: Population, Employment and Dwelling Unit Projections, 1995-2020; UW-L, Dec. 1995; URS/BRW assumptions

* Acres needed is based on the following growth assumptions:

Residential land need assumptions:

1. Land designated for low density residential reflects single-family uses and land designated for medium/high density reflects multi-family uses.
2. Existing mix of single family dwellings (62%) to multi-family dwellings (38%), per County 2020 Development Plan, will continue.
3. Number of persons per household for single-family dwellings was assumed to consist of an average of 3.4 persons and 1.8 persons for multi-family dwellings.
4. The average density of single-family development was assumed to be 2.5 units per acre, and multi-family density was assumed to be 9 units per acre.

Office, retail and industrial land need assumptions:

1. Future job growth mix will consist of 40% office/service, 40% industrial, and 20% retail.
2. Number of employees (jobs) per square foot (s.f.) of land area by land use is:
 - Office/service = 4/1000 s.f.
 - Industrial = 2/1000 s.f.
 - Retail = 2/1000 s.f.
3. Floor Area Ratio (FAR) by land use is:
 - Office/service = .30
 - Industrial = .25
 - Retail = .15

Table 4-5 allocates the 493 acres needed to accommodate projected growth into five-year increments. As indicated below, an average of 123 acres would be developed or redeveloped every five years, or roughly, 25 acres per year. Of course, land development rarely occurs in evenly spread increments. In La Crosse, the timing of new development and redevelopment will depend largely on market demand, when existing brownfield sites are cleaned up to allow new development and when land in surrounding townships might be annexed into the City.

Table 4-5 : Forecast Land Needs in Five Year Increments, 2000-2020

Land Use	Total Gross Acres by Land Use Category				
	2000-2005	2006-2010	2011-2015	2016-2020	Change 2000-2020
Residential	79	79	79	80	317
Commercial	24	25	25	24	98
Industrial	19	20	20	19	78
Total	122	124	124	123	493

Land Use and Development Objectives and Actions

This section describes what the City wants to accomplish and specific actions that can be taken to achieve those objectives.

Growth and Redevelopment

In accordance with the Concept Plan, reinvestment needs within the City should be given priority over new land development and fringe growth. Future development in La Crosse should occur by investing in established areas, carefully planning new neighborhoods, providing attractive public amenities and protecting environmental resources. Anticipated growth will be accommodated through a combination of urban infill and redevelopment and selective expansion of the City, primarily to the east, following existing growth patterns. The City can influence the desired future growth pattern by providing incentives for redevelopment, enforcement of appropriate development controls, and strategic extension of urban services.

Objective 1: Implement Future Land Use Map. Regulate land use consistently with the Future Land Use Map (Figure 4-1) and the objectives of the Land Use plan element.

The Future Land Use Map depicts the desired future pattern of land use in La Crosse and the adjacent coulee area. In order to achieve this land use pattern, decisions regarding zoning and development must be consistent with the Future Land Use Map and corresponding land use categories described in Appendix A.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Future Land Use Map.** In conjunction with adoption of *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan*, the City shall formally adopt the Future Land Use Map shown on Figure 4-1. The Future Land Use Map should be reviewed for accuracy and relevance by the City staff and Plan Commission at least once every two years. The Future Land Use Map shall be used to guide rezonings and capital improvement programming.

Objective 2: Targeted Redevelopment. Give redevelopment and reinvestment priority to locations on the riverfront, in distressed neighborhoods and key activity centers.

Redevelopment and reinvestment in underutilized properties is essential to strengthen older areas of La Crosse and provide opportunities to strengthen the City’s tax base, provide new jobs, and housing opportunities. Because redevelopment can involve costly environmental clean-up, land consolidation and preparation, incentives are often necessary to encourage private sector reinvestment in these areas. As such, the City will need to assume a proactive role in initiating and guiding redevelopment efforts.

Policies/Actions:

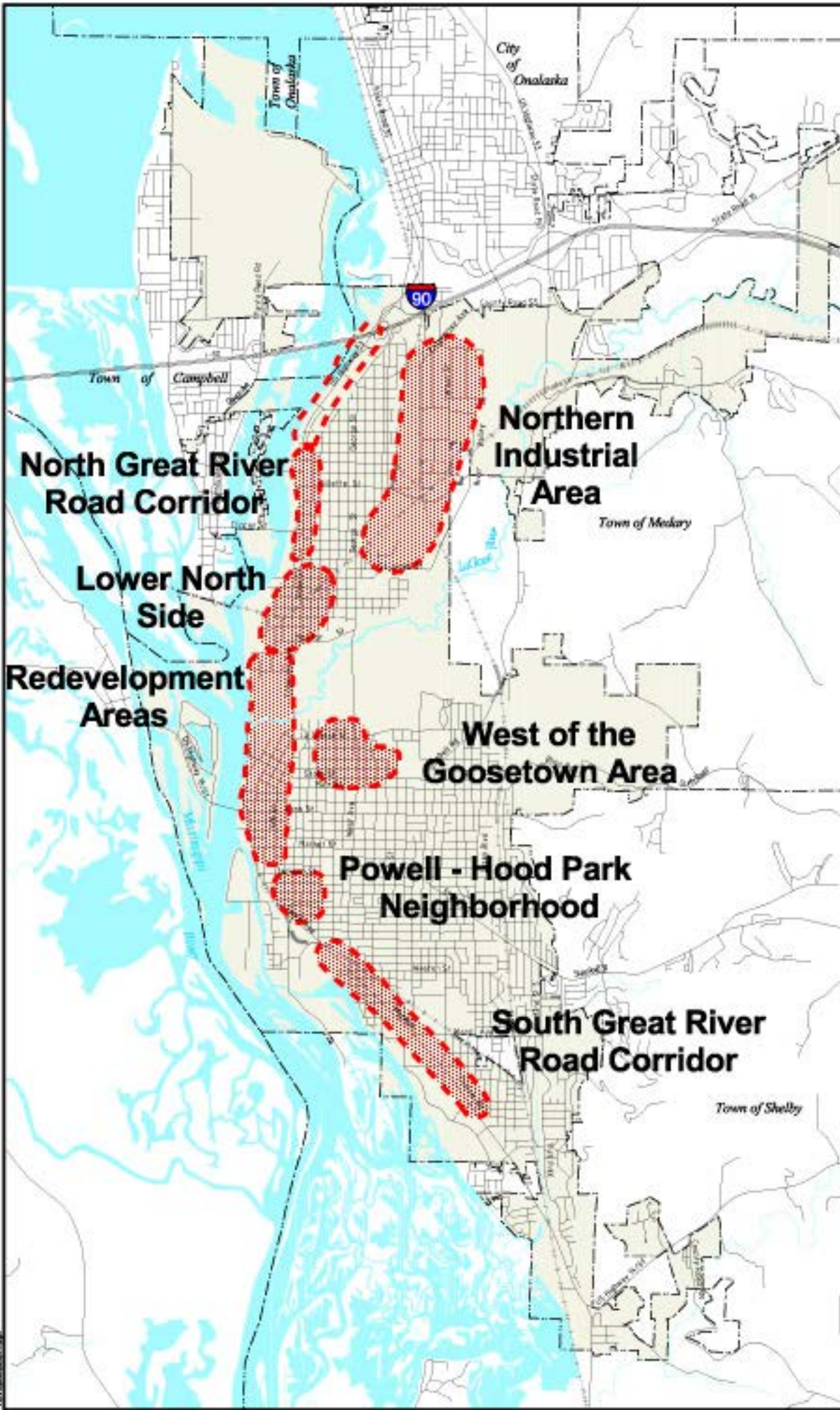
1. Revitalization Areas. The City shall prioritize and initiate redevelopment efforts in select areas of La Crosse. The Issues and Conditions report identified several revitalization study areas based on factors such as incompatible land use relationships, building deterioration, economic obsolescence, under-utilization of land, impairment of sites by hazardous wastes, or emerging economic opportunities. These areas are depicted on Figure 4-2 and include:

- **Northern Industrial Area:** The Northern Industrial Area consists of rail yards, post-war and older manufacturing and warehouse sites, open storage yards and truck parking. Lot coverage tends to be low. A large part of this area is in the river floodplain.
- **North Great River Road Corridor:** This major entrance to La Crosse from the Interstate Highway is lined with a mixture of industry, businesses and housing. There is very little road-edge landscaping, and commercial signs compete for attention. Land could be used more intensively in light of the high degree of access enjoyed by the corridor, and appearances should be improved for the same reason.
- **On-going Redevelopment Areas:** This area includes four redevelopment project areas established by the City where TIF and other public redevelopment powers may be used. Opportunities exist for expanded and improved parks along the rivers, natural open space and attractive housing, offices or other activities that take advantage of the confluence of the two rivers.

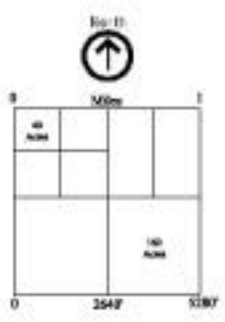
These areas include:

- Gateway
 - Market Square
 - Area North and West of City Hall, and
 - The Riverside Area (includes the City’s Riverside Redevelopment Project Area)
- **Lower North Side:** The Lower North Side includes older housing and an incompatible mixture of housing and businesses along Copeland Avenue and Rose Street, a one-way pair.

**Figure 4-2
Potential
Revitalization
Study Areas**



-  Study Implementation Area
-  Revitalization Study Areas
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Street
-  City of La Crosse
-  Water



**City of
La Crosse**
*Comprehensive
Plan*

- **West of the Goosetown Area:** Businesses, unattractive apartment buildings and deteriorated older housing crowd into this district, which also has excessive auto and truck traffic.
- **Powell-Hood Park Neighborhood:** This residential neighborhood has generally poor housing conditions, several unattractive apartment buildings located in the midst of single-family houses, several small, old commercial buildings that are not compatible with their surroundings, deteriorated streets, old park facilities and high rates of crime. These and other problems were described in the City’s 2000 *RENEW* (Restore Everybody’s Neighborhood Effectively and Win) plan, a comprehensive approach to neighborhood revitalization.
- **South Great River Road Corridor:** This corridor contains a mixture of businesses and housing, many driveways, overhead power lines, oversized commercial signs and incompatible land use relationships. As with the northern Great River Road segment, access and visibility would indicate a potential for better and more intensive land use, improved urban design and better land site access management.



Rehabilitated Amtrak Station in the Lower North Side neighborhood

2. **Utilize Incentives and Funding.** The City shall utilize funding programs and incentives, such as matching grants, CDBG funds, and tax-increment financing (TIF) to facilitate site clearance and resale, façade rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, environmental remediation, and infrastructure improvements.
3. **Improve Infrastructure.** The City shall coordinate public actions and investments, such as property consolidation, road reconstruction, and provision of public utilities, to encourage and facilitate private investment in areas targeted for revitalization.

Property Inventory. The City shall develop and maintain an inventory of buildings and properties available for redevelopment or rehabilitation. The City will make this inventory information readily available to neighborhood groups, the local real estate community, private developers, and others.

Additional policies regarding redevelopment are included in the Economic Development, Neighborhoods and Housing, and Heritage Preservation plan elements.



Riverside Park levy
before (above) and after reconstruction (below)



Objective 3: Compact and Contiguous Growth. Accommodate new development on the City’s fringe in areas contiguous to existing developed areas of La Crosse that allow efficient extension of public services and roads and have minimal impact to sensitive environmental resources.

While much of new development should be directed to infill and redevelopment sites within the current City limits, some growth on the fringe will be necessary to meet anticipated population growth and housing demand. New development on the fringe should occur in a manner that allows smaller, closely spaced or clustered lots in areas relatively close or contiguous to existing development. This will foster:

- Efficient extension of public services;
- Protection of sensitive environmental resources;
- Preservation of rural character;
- Conservation of nearby fringe areas for future urbanization when public sewer and water service become available; and
- Preservation of the distinction between urban and rural areas.

The City has defined a Sewer Service Area within which future municipal sewer and water service may be provided. Given steep topography in the outlying coulees, only select areas within the sewer service area can feasibly be serviced. In order to provide for anticipated growth, new housing and neighborhood development should be directed to those areas. Providing services to facilitate compact neighborhood development in close proximity to existing development and utilities will help reduce sprawl farther out in the surrounding townships.

Policies/Actions:

1. Extension of Urban Services. The City shall only extend water and sewer lines outside its present border in exchange for annexation of land or in accordance with an approved inter-municipal boundary agreement. The City shall focus extension of urban services in select areas within the current Sewer Service Area as shown on Figure 4-3 and described below in priority order:

1. Town of Shelby along U.S. 14/61 east of current City limits
2. Town of Shelby along STH 35 south of current City limits
3. Town of Shelby west of the BNSF railroad tracks and south of Shelby Road
4. Town of Shelby along Ebner Coulee Road and Floral Lane
5. Town of Medary along Smith Valley Road, Keil Coulee and other small coulees
6. Town of Medary along and adjacent to CTH B
7. Town of Shelby along Hwy 33 and atop bluffs east of Granddad’s Bluff
8. Town of Shelby along Old Vineyard Road
9. Town of Shelby along Crown Blvd/Queen Ave.

Given steep topography in the outlying coulees, these select areas reflect where extending sewer service would most likely be feasible. More detailed information would be needed to evaluate the costs and benefits of a specific system extension.

2. **Perimeter Urban Densities.** In undeveloped areas where City utilities are available, the City shall encourage the provision of a range of housing types and densities. Densities for single family residential development are expected to be about four dwellings per acre; with densities in the steep coulee areas being significantly less than flatter areas on the ridge tops and valley bottoms. Efforts to protect steep wooded bluff slopes and provide utilities cost-effectively will also be a factor in the location of higher-density housing in this perimeter area.
3. **Rural Development Densities.** The City shall encourage the County and surrounding Townships to retain large lot sizes and an overall gross density of no more than one house per 35 acres in areas without sewer that are intended to remain predominantly agricultural or rural.

Rural areas in Medary and Shelby Townships, beyond the Sewer Service Area boundary, are primarily used for agricultural uses, although some scattered housing clusters or large-lot single family development also exists in these areas. While the City has little direct control over development beyond its jurisdictional boundaries, it will be important to work with the County and Townships to limit rural growth. Keeping large tracts of land intact and limiting rural development densities can help reduce sprawl, preserve agricultural land uses and rural character, and guard against inefficient subdivision of land, which could limit options for future development and result in inefficient and expensive extension of sewer service.

4. **Annexation.** To provide for anticipated future growth and facilitate compact, coordinated, and sustainable development on its fringe, the City shall pursue annexation of land within its Sewer Service Area boundary where:
 - Municipal services are required to achieve desired densities and provide adequate resource protection.
 - The City of La Crosse is deemed the most capable of providing needed municipal services.
 - Utility extensions can be achieved in a cost-effective and environmentally sensitive manner.

Wisconsin law makes it difficult for a city to annex land from adjacent townships. Generally, annexation can be initiated by a city through a referendum or by request from landowners. The following describes how the City should respond in the two annexation scenarios:

Annexation Initiated by City. The City has identified several locations within its Sewer Service Area that are in its interest to annex from a strategic perspective. Essentially, these are areas where the extension of sanitary sewer service could occur in

the most cost-effective and environmentally sensitive manner. Priority for annexation shall be given to the locations illustrated on Figure 4-3.

Annexation Initiated by Electors. When sanitary sewer is requested by owners of private property outside of La Crosse but within its Sewer Service Area, the City should pursue annexation of those properties if city services can be provided consistent with the criteria listed above. If the property for which sanitary sewer is requested is vacant and requires sanitary sewer for development, plans should first be submitted to the City for review to ensure compliance with the City’s development policies and standards.

5. Regional Coordination and Leadership. Through its extra-territorial review authority and development of boundary agreements, the City shall continue to work with the County and surrounding townships to coordinate the regional development pattern, implementation of regional systems such as major sewer and roadway improvements, and push for a regional comprehensive plan.

6. Coulee Plans. The City shall prepare development plans for Mormon Coulee (high priority) and Smith Valley. These plans should follow the process currently used in preparing neighborhood plans in established areas of the City. These plans should identify:

- Areas where development should be prohibited or restricted due to environmental constraints.
- Appropriate land uses, including identification of areas where mixed use development would be appropriate.
- Potential locations and timing for extension of public utility lines.
- Potential road improvements or new roads to serve the area.
- Opportunities to create parks and create trail systems and connections.



Coulee vista

Objective 4: Downtown Revitalization. Strengthen the role of downtown La Crosse as the economic, civic and entertainment heart of the region through continued support of downtown revitalization efforts.

Downtown La Crosse is the traditional economic, civic and entertainment heart of the region. As regional development pressure has increased, more new growth, particularly residential and retail, has shifted to the north along the I-90 corridor where there is ample

land available for development. To counterbalance that outward growth, it is increasingly important to retain and strengthen the position of downtown La Crosse as the regional hub of office and government employment, culture, entertainment and tourism.

Policies/Actions:

1. Implement *City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update*. The City will continue to support and implement the policies and design guidelines in the *City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update*. In recent years, the City and Downtown stakeholders (particularly Downtown Mainstreet, Inc.) have made significant investments in buildings, streetscape, and riverfront improvements and planning. Their efforts produced the *City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update*, which provides a strong framework to guide downtown revitalization into the future. Key strategies of that plan include:

- Improve Accessibility and Connections
- Encourage Mixed Use
- Improve Design/Aesthetics
- Encourage Redevelopment and Rehabilitation

2. Continue Downtown Physical Improvements. The City shall continue to support improvements to the built environment downtown and along the riverfront through adoption and enforcement of design guidelines. In addition to *City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update*, the City has developed design guidelines for new buildings, signage, sidewalks and streets, landscaping, and building rehabilitation in the downtown area. These include:

- Historic Downtown La Crosse Wayfinding and Streetscape Guidelines (adopted)
- Downtown La Crosse Design Guidelines (not adopted)
- La Crosse Commercial Historic District – Urban Design Overlay (not adopted)

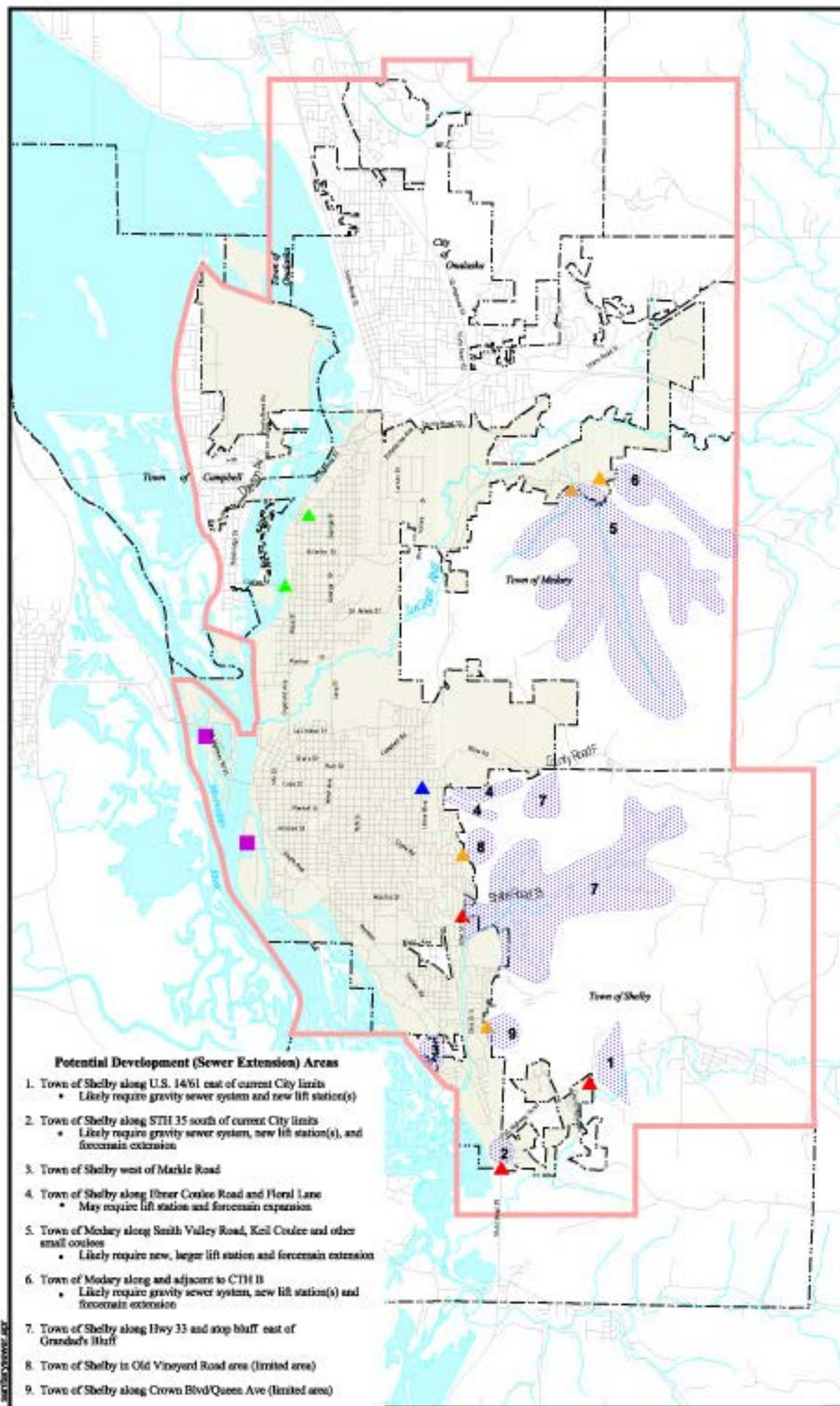
To further encourage appropriate building design, the City shall utilize Smart Codes (i.e., such as used by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) and the Historic Building Code.

3. Promote Downtown. The City will continue to work cooperatively with the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Mainstreet, Inc., the La Crosse Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the La Crosse Area Development Corporation, and others to promote downtown La Crosse as a place to work, live, and play. City efforts may include:

- Maintaining a list of downtown properties available for redevelopment.
- Create programs for redevelopment of upper floors of buildings.

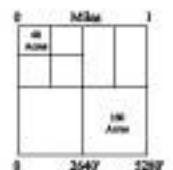
**Figure 4-3
Urban
Expansion
Areas**

-  8" Existing Sewer End
-  12" Existing Sewer End
-  15" Existing Sewer End
-  30" Existing Sewer End
-  Waste Water Plant
-  Sewer Extension Areas
-  Water
-  Sewer Service Area Boundary
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Street
-  City of La Crosse



Potential Development (Sewer Extension) Areas

1. Town of Shelby along U.S. 14/61 east of current City limits
 - Likely require gravity sewer system and new lift station(s)
2. Town of Shelby along STH 35 south of current City limits
 - Likely require gravity sewer system, new lift station(s), and forcemain extension
3. Town of Shelby west of Markle Road
4. Town of Shelby along Ibrer Coulee Road and Floral Lane
 - May require lift station and forcemain expansion
5. Town of Medary along Smith Valley Road, Keil Coulee and other small outlots
 - Likely require new, larger lift station and forcemain extension
6. Town of Medary along and adjacent to CTH B
 - Likely require gravity sewer system, new lift station(s) and forcemain extension
7. Town of Shelby along Hwy 33 and atop bluff east of Grandin's Bluff
8. Town of Shelby in Old Vineyard Road area (limited area)
9. Town of Shelby along Crown Blvd/Queen Ave (limited area)



sanjay@vowweb.org



Streetscape improvements in downtown La Crosse

Objective 5: New Neighborhoods. Plan new neighborhoods comprehensively to include a variety of housing options, neighborhood-oriented retail and service businesses, and interconnected networks of roads, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

To the extent feasible, new neighborhoods should be planned and designed to be functionally self-sufficient by providing a variety of housing options and supportive neighborhood-oriented services. New neighborhoods should be well-integrated with their surrounding environment and should be designed in a manner that minimizes negative environmental impacts. The street network should be designed to facilitate connections to the existing roadway network and to other neighborhoods. Residential streets should also be designed to encourage appropriately slow traffic speeds, street trees, and an interconnected system of sidewalks and bicycle paths.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Comprehensive and Flexible Design.** The City shall amend its zoning code to allow flexible development techniques, such as planned mixed-use developments, rural clustered housing, open space subdivisions, and other innovative design concepts. The City shall also encourage surrounding townships to utilize flexible development techniques, where appropriate to protect environmental or agricultural resources and foster cost-efficient urban services.
2. **Housing Variety.** The City shall amend its zoning code to ensure that regulations allow a variety of housing, including traditional, neo-traditional, and contemporary designs and encourage innovative site plans that combine various residential densities, and where appropriate, neighborhood-oriented office, service and retail land uses.



Walk-up type apartments can be used in the revitalization areas



New housing construction in older neighborhood using sensitive design and scale

3. Environmental Protection. The City shall foster environmentally sensitive development through:

- Continued enforcement of existing **development regulations** and, where necessary, adopt additional regulations to protect natural features such as woodlands, slopes, and streams from development impacts. Development regulations should include low impact development and conservation design techniques, often referred to as BMPs. A list of common BMPs is included in Appendix B.
- Use of **incentives and flexible regulations** to achieve environmentally responsible development patterns. Such incentives might include land trusts, open space zoning, density bonuses, transfer or purchase of development rights, and conservation easements.
- **Acquisition of key undeveloped parcels** to maintain open space corridors to foster wildlife movement and minimize habitat fragmentation. Acquisition may occur through parkland dedication requirements, through direct purchase from private property owners, or through partnerships with other organizations, such as the Mississippi Valley Conservancy.

4. Connected Street Network. Through its subdivision regulations, the City shall require street patterns in new subdivisions to provide for interconnections and public street access in each cardinal direction unless impractical because of natural, environmental or other constraints. Future streets and through connections should be illustrated on ghost plats and installed as stub streets.

5. Pedestrian and Bicyclist Network. The City shall require new residential or neighborhood development plans to include comprehensively planned networks of sidewalks and bicycle paths that provide connections to neighborhood shopping areas, parks, schools and other key destinations.

A more detailed discussion of the design of subdivisions, streets, and pedestrian and bicycle systems is provided in the Urban Design and Transportation plan elements.



Bike path through new residential development

Objective 6: Enhance Commercial Corridors. Enhance major commercial corridors by improving the design and appearance of these corridors and by planning adjacent land uses in a manner supportive of the functional classification of the road.

Major commercial corridors contain a mixture of housing and businesses and carry a large amount of traffic. As some commercial and industrial uses have grown, residential properties on, or adjacent to these corridors have been subjected to increased traffic, noise, lights, and the proliferation of commercial signs. Enhancing major commercial corridors will involve minimizing land use and traffic conflicts, reducing haphazard development, and improving the appearance of the roadway.

Major commercial corridors in La Crosse include: Highway 53, Highway 14/61/South Ave. and Highway 16. More detailed discussion regarding improving traffic and the physical appearance of major roadways is provided in the Transportation and Urban Design plan elements, respectively.

Policies/Actions:

1. Appropriate Land Uses. The City shall plan land use along major road corridors in a manner supportive of the functional classification of the road and the character of adjacent neighborhoods or districts. To facilitate appropriate land uses, the City shall:

- Identify where land use conflicts occur and target those properties for proactive rezoning. This may occur in conjunction with a neighborhood planning process or through implementation of adopted plans such as the *U.S. Highway 53 Corridor Plan*.
- Consider use of eminent domain to purchase property and relocate existing property owners in situations where rezoning alone would not result in timely removal of obsolete or inappropriate land uses.

- Utilize financial incentives such as tax-increment financing, federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, and general obligation bonds to acquire, assemble and clear property to stimulate private development consistent with the desired planned land use.

2. Create Buffers. The City shall establish buffers between land uses of different scale and intensity through provision of incentives, direct property acquisition, and establishment and enforcement of buffer requirements.

Land use conflicts generally occur where abutting land uses are of a different scale and intensity. If this is an existing situation, the City will need to work with the property owner, and perhaps **provide incentives** to encourage the property owner to install site improvements and landscaping to minimize the conflict. As with inappropriate land uses, the City may have to **purchase properties** in order to establish buffers. When new development, expansions or redevelopment occurs, the City shall require buffering in the form of **landscaping, fencing, or increased setbacks** between adjacent uses. Buffer standards shall be incorporated into the Unified Development Ordinance.

3. Appearance and Design. To improve the appearance of commercial corridors, the City shall:

- Install landscaping, predominantly street trees, coordinated lighting and other streetscape elements in conjunction with public street reconstruction.
- Remove, relocate, or bury power lines to the extent possible, in conjunction with street reconstruction or major private development.
- Require parking lot screening on commercial properties abutting major roadway corridors. If necessary, amend zoning ordinance to include screening standards.
- Develop and enforce sign design standards and work to remove (via amortization plan) or limit the location and proliferation of off-premise signs.
- Obtain federal funding to purchase and remove billboards along the Great River Road.
- Comply with all other recommendations in the Urban Design plan element regarding commercial corridors.

4. Access Management and Internal Circulation. To improve access to businesses located on major commercial corridors and improve internal circulation within and between commercial developments, the City shall:

- Require traffic impact studies for larger (i.e., +30,000 s.f.) commercial development projects or in locations where road system capacity has already been identified as a problem.
- Encourage shared access points and parking between adjacent commercial developments.
- Require that sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities be provided within commercial developments, and to the extent possible, between adjacent developments.
- Require areas of concentrated commercial businesses to accommodate access by public transit.

- Comply with all other recommendations in the Transportation plan element regarding access management on commercial corridors.

Neighborhood Stabilization

Some neighborhoods in La Crosse have experienced decline and disinvestments, primarily due to problems associated with inappropriate land uses, ineffective development control and enforcement, and physical deterioration. Adding to these “push” are opportunities to build new homes and businesses on plentiful available land outside the City limits. In order to reverse or balance this push/pull effect, public incentives and regulations should be directed at encouraging private reinvestment, rehabilitation and maintenance in existing neighborhoods and several “activity centers” to ensure that established neighborhoods remain vital, attractive places to live and work.

Objective 7: Improve Land Use Compatibility. Minimize or eliminate land use conflicts through redevelopment of blighted, vacant or underutilized properties, enhanced buffering and screening, and improved building and site design.

La Crosse has a history of liberal zoning and development regulation that has created situations where some land uses or developments are incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood in terms of intensity, scale and appearance. To remedy that situation will require public efforts and incentives to improve existing neighborhoods by redeveloping blighted, vacant or obsolescent properties, requiring better building and site design, and encouraging better landscaping and buffering.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Zoning Text Amendments.** In order to prevent new land use incompatibilities and to remedy existing incompatibilities, the City shall amend its zoning code to:
 - Provide performance-based criteria to measure and determine appropriate land use intensity. Such criteria might include: traffic generation, hours of operation, building design and buffering.
 - Provide landscaping and screening standards to buffer dissimilar uses and screen parking areas from public sidewalks and streets.
 - Provide building design guidelines regarding appropriate scale and materials for new infill developments and building expansions. The Urban Design plan element provides a more detailed discussion of building design guidelines.
- 2. Property Acquisition.** The City shall consider acquisition of private property, on a case-specific basis, to eliminate land use incompatibilities, remove deteriorated or blighted structures and encourage redevelopment consistent with the planned land use for the area.

In many situations, land use incompatibilities result from incremental changes that have occurred over time as economic trends and development standards have changed. In those cases, the City may need to purchase certain properties to eliminate land use incompatibilities. This should be done on a case-specific basis and will require careful scrutiny of the costs and benefits involved in such action. Financial tools the City might use for property acquisition and relocation include: tax-increment financing, federal CDBG funds, and general obligation bonds.

- 3. Neighborhood Planning.** The City will continue to implement the recommendations of completed neighborhood plans and prepare specific plans for neighborhoods or districts where a need for additional guidance is identified.

The City has an established neighborhood planning process to address issues affecting specific neighborhoods. This process engages the local neighborhood and strives to protect the best aspects of established neighborhoods from negative effects such as excessive vehicle traffic, blighted properties, and incompatible land uses that should be phased out. The planning process outlines strategies to address these issues and capitalize on opportunities to enhance the neighborhood. When preparing neighborhood plans or implementing public improvements, the objectives and actions described in this element and the Neighborhoods and Housing plan element shall be observed.

- Neighborhood plans completed to date include: Lower North Side-Depot, Powell-Hood Park-Hamilton, Goosetown-Campus, and Washburn.
- Others being considered include: Cass-King, Holy Trinity, and East Campus.



Objective 8: Maintain Traditional Urban Character. Support and foster public and private efforts to maintain the traditional character in established neighborhoods.

La Crosse contains many established neighborhoods that possess traditional character and charm. Common characteristics include historic architecture, tree-lined streets, mixed uses including nodes of neighborhood-oriented shops and services, and the presence of nearby public facilities and institutions, such as schools, fire stations, libraries, churches, and parks. This traditional character is an asset that distinguishes established La Crosse neighborhoods from newer neighborhoods. To maintain and foster that character will require careful design of new and infill development, sensitive rehabilitation of existing buildings, diligent attention to needed infrastructure improvements, and sufficient and timely property maintenance.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Mixed-Use Areas.** The City shall support the development of mixed-use development in certain locations generally identified on the Future Land Use Map as Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), MRO, and High Intensity Retail, Office or Housing (HRO).

Mixed-use generally refers to development containing two or more types of uses such as shops and housing, located above and below one another in the same building. An example would be the “shop-top” housing proposed in the City’s draft Unified Development Ordinance.

The City shall take the following steps to encourage mixed-use development:

- Create new or overlay zoning districts, to allow mixed-use development in areas designated TND, MRO, and HRO on the Future Land Use Map. Such locations should be close to, or incorporate higher density housing and transit services and contain a mix of mutually supportive commercial and entertainment activities, pedestrian-friendly gathering places, and flexible parking requirements.
- Adopt performance standards that would measure the compatibility of mixed use development in a specific area based on: land use mix in the area (i.e., amount of commercial vs. residential), development intensity, building and site design, and circulation/traffic patterns.



Vertically mixed uses with housing or offices above storefronts

2. Community Facilities. One of the major amenities in established La Crosse neighborhoods is the presence of nearby community facilities such as parks, schools, and libraries. These facilities are typically primary destinations and are often considered neighborhood landmarks that lend charm and identity to the neighborhood. The City shall take the following steps to ensure parks, schools, and other public facilities remain neighborhood assets:

- Work with facility operators and neighborhood groups to address issues related to parking and traffic on a case-specific basis.
- Work to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to community facilities through continual maintenance and construction of sidewalks and bicycle paths along public streets in and around public facilities.
- Support adaptive reuse of under-utilized community facilities with uses that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood setting. This may involve working cooperatively with school districts, the County, and others who have ownership control over these facilities.

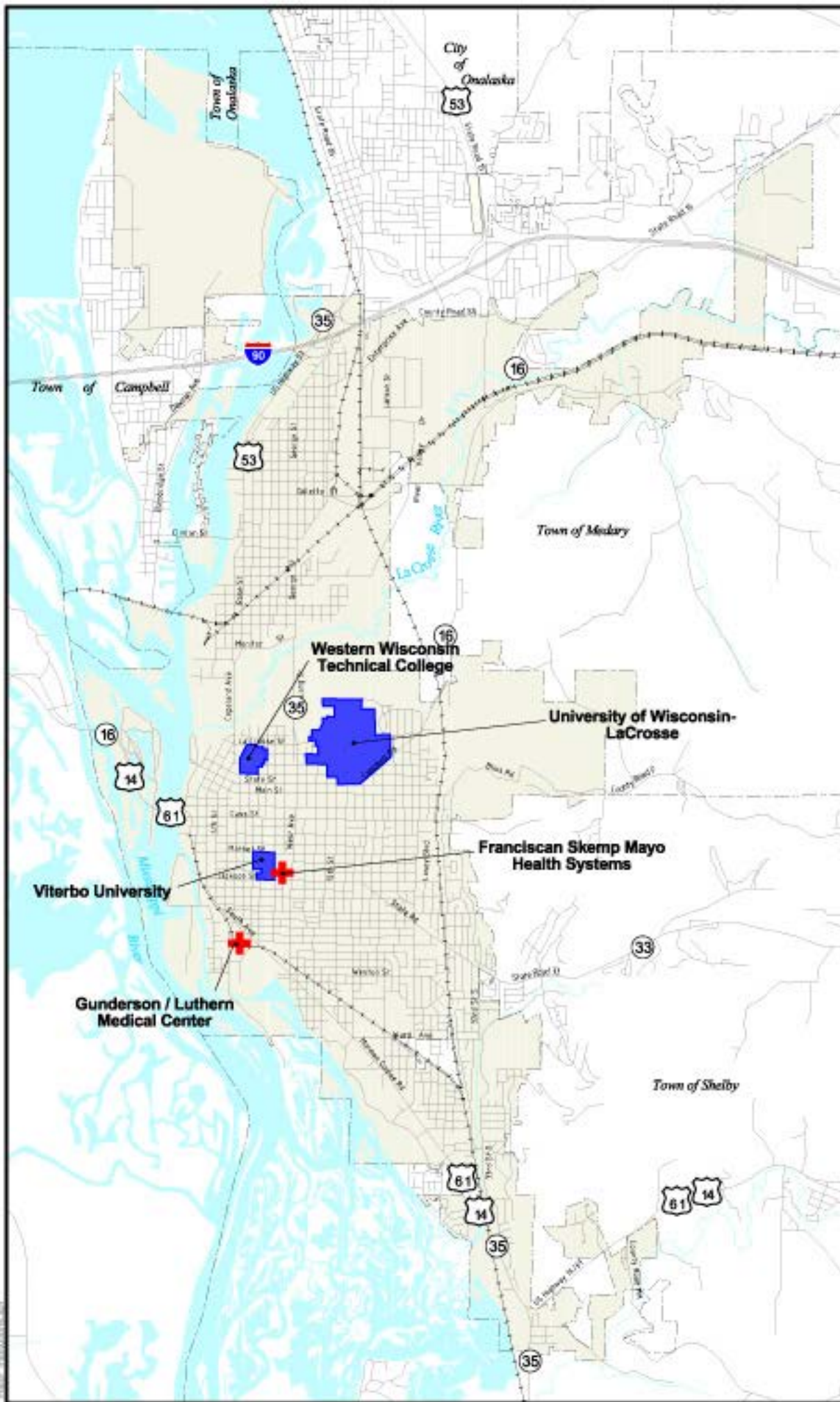
The Neighborhoods and Housing, Transportation, and Community Facilities plan elements should be referenced for more specific information and recommendations.




3. Site and Building Design. To ensure that new development and redevelopment enhances the surrounding neighborhood, the City shall require compliance with site and building design guidelines as established in the Urban Design plan element. These guidelines would apply to site and building improvements on public and private property and would be enforced through the City’s development review and building permit process.

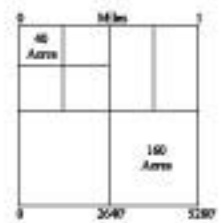
Objective 9: Major Institutions. Provide for institutional growth while protecting the character and integrity of surrounding neighborhoods.

La Crosse is home to several large educational institutions and medical facilities as shown on Figure 4-4. These facilities function as neighborhood anchors providing local jobs and services and contribute to neighborhood identity. While generally recognized as community assets, their physical expansion can encroach on and alter the character of surrounding residential neighborhoods. Accommodating institutional expansion in a manner that complements the surrounding neighborhood will require working in partnership with the institutions to balance the sometimes divergent needs and desires of the institutions, neighborhood residents and business owners.

**Figure 4-4
Major
Institutions**



-  *Municipal Boundary*
-  *City of La Crosse*
-  *Water*
-  *Railroads*
-  *Roads*
-  *Campus Limit*
-  *Medical Facility*



**City of
La Crosse**
*Comprehensive
Plan*

Policies/Actions:

1. Institutional Master Plans. The City shall require major institutions to develop and adopt master plans to define their anticipated future physical expansion needs. The City’s Draft Unified Development Code outlines the process for establishing and updating these master plans. It will be important to engage neighborhood residents and business owners in the planning process. These plans should:

- Identify land needs and establish perimeter **growth boundaries**;
- Identify locations for **new buildings or additions** and establish design guidelines to ensure new buildings are compatible with the scale and character of adjacent properties;
- Encourage **building up, rather than out** to minimize need to acquire additional property.
- Identify locations for new or expansion **parking lots and/or ramps** and require parking lot **landscaping and screening** from streets and abutting properties;
- Encourage shared parking arrangements between adjacent uses;
- Identify and develop **traffic flow patterns** to minimize congestion and other traffic-related issues on local residential streets;
- Establish **master lighting plans**, paying particular attention to lighting around athletic facilities and other high activity night-use facilities;
- Establish **comprehensive sign programs** to foster identification and circulation and to minimize the proliferation of excessive signage in neighborhoods; and
- Comply with **design guidelines** and development standards outlined in the Urban Design plan element and the City’s Institutional Campus Overlay District zoning regulations.

2. Institutional Coordination and Communication. The City shall serve as the liaison between the institutions and surrounding neighborhoods during the process of developing master plans. The City will encourage open communications by:

- Including representatives from the affected institutions in neighborhood planning efforts.
- Facilitating public meetings when necessary, to encourage dialog and input on institutional master plans.



UW-La Crosse and Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center – two of the City’s major institutions

Objective 10: Stem Property Deterioration. Foster maintenance and investment in private property to ensure established neighborhoods remain attractive, safe and comfortable places to live.

Many neighborhoods in La Crosse were developed before 1940 and are beginning to show signs of age and deterioration. The cumulative effects of time, the elements, and insufficient maintenance have left some neighborhoods physically blighted - heightening concerns about safety and security, and diminishing the neighborhood image. Old, traditional neighborhoods are a unique asset that should be protected and enhanced. That will require coordinating public sector actions and investments to foster private maintenance and investment to ensure established neighborhoods remain attractive, safe and comfortable places to live. See the Neighborhoods and Housing plan element for additional information in this regard.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Proactive Code Enforcement.** The City shall commit adequate staff and other resources to foster timely detection, response and follow-up to property maintenance and housing, building, and zoning code violations.
2. **Incentives.** The City currently has a housing rehabilitation program that has, and will continue to provide incentives for reinvestment in traditional neighborhoods. To expand on those efforts, the City should also continue to support programs aimed at improving the public realm within neighborhoods, such as:

- **Adopt-a-Block programs** to engage residents and business owners in seasonal or routine group efforts to collect trash throughout the neighborhood;
- **Community clean-up events** held once or twice a year to provide convenient means for residents and businesses to get rid of old and under-used items, including appliances;
- **Alley beautification programs** where awards are given to people who substantially improve the appearance of their alley through landscaping and diligent maintenance;
- **Community gardens** where a vacant lot or undeveloped area is converted to a garden plot that is tended by area residents.



Alley beautification in practice

- ***Neighborhood Restore Everybody's Neighborhood Effectively and Win (RENEW) Action Plans*** outline specific steps that can be taken to improvement neighborhoods.

3. **Education.** To encourage private property owners to maintain and reinvest in their property, the City shall work with University of Wisconsin-Extension and others to create brochures and organize workshops or seminars to provide information and guidance on various aspects of property upkeep. Topics might include: painting, weather-proofing, security measures, composting, and low-maintenance landscaping.

Improving Environmental Quality

The striking environment and physical setting of La Crosse present challenges to development, but those features are also integral to the City's character and quality of life. It is also important to recognize and capitalize on opportunities to cleanup and redevelop brownfield sites and to strengthen connections between the natural environment and built areas through creation of pathways and environmental corridors, preservation of significant views, and use of indigenous landscaping.

Objective 11: Resource Protection. Safeguard and improve environmental features as a means of promoting sustainable development, urban revitalization and quality of life.

As new development and redevelopment occur, it will be important to protect existing natural resources from development impacts through environmentally sensitive design. Because natural resource systems extend beyond geo-political boundaries, actions to protect and enhance these resources will require coordination and cooperation between the City, La Crosse County, townships, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. In addition, efforts should be coordinated with private or non-profit environmental organizations (e.g., Mississippi Valley Conservancy) that work to protect and enhance the natural environment in the Coulee Region.

Policies/Actions:

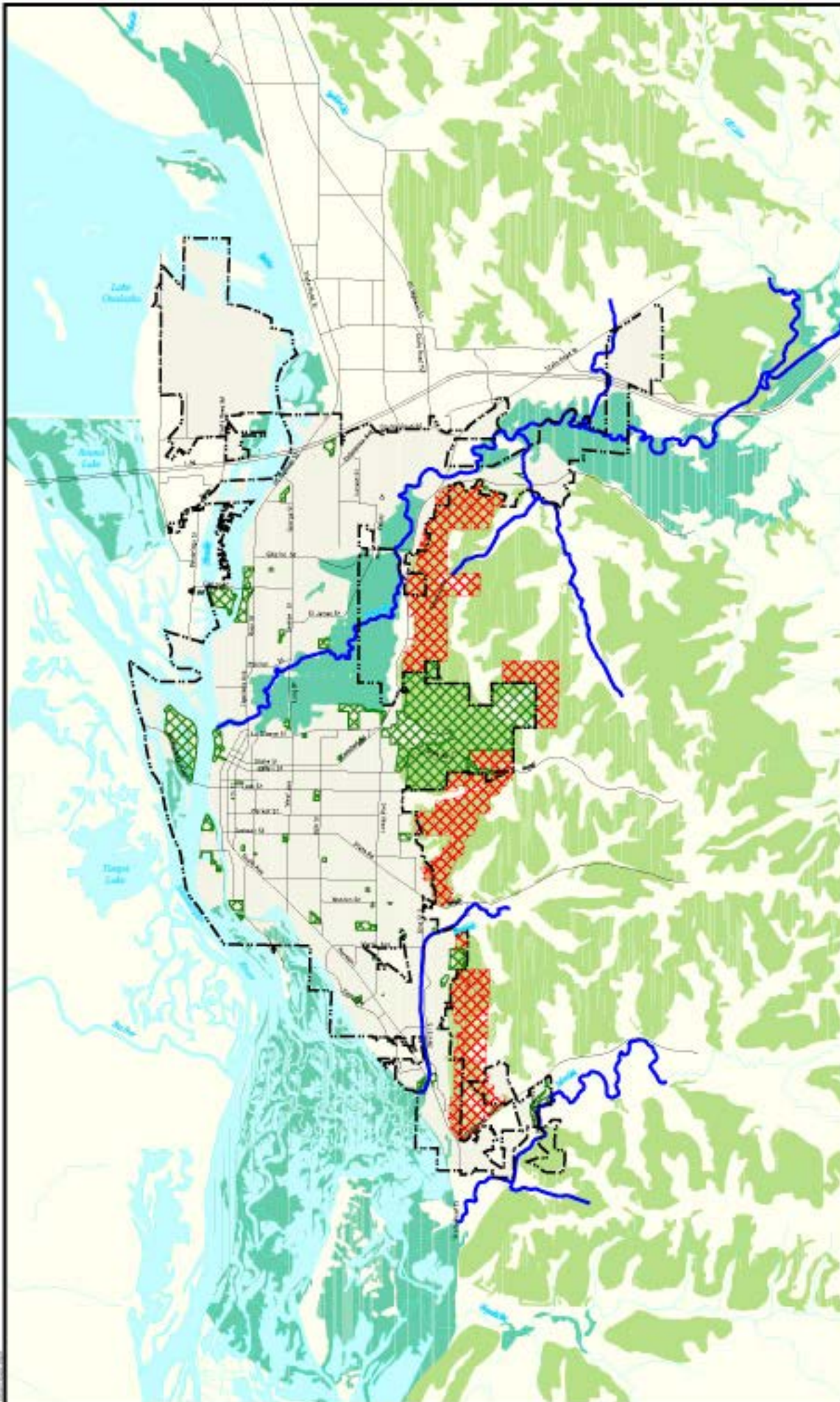
1. **Inventory and Map.** The City shall work with the County to develop and maintain an inventory map of natural resources that are especially sensitive to development impacts. These include wetlands, floodplains, trout streams, steep slopes and woodlands. An initial inventory of these resources (Figure 4-5), and associated data base, was generated using a geographic information system that can be easily updated as new information is obtained. This map and data will allow sensitive resources to be readily identified as part of the development review process to guard against inappropriate encroachment and ensure adequate protection measures and/or development restrictions are applied.
1. **Strengthen Development Controls.** The City shall protect steep coulee slopes and bluffs by amending its zoning and subdivision ordinance (or Unified Development Ordinance) to include the following conditions and standards:

- a) Prohibit any development on sites with an average slope greater than 30 percent.
- b) Prohibit construction of driveways longer than 200 feet on slopes greater than 18 percent and require that they be designed to follow natural contours.
- c) Prohibit development within 60 feet of the bluff line or coulee ridge line and require 40 feet of this buffer area to remain in a natural conditions (i.e., no grading or removal of existing vegetation unless deemed diseased or invasive species).
- d) Require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for development in areas with steep slopes.
- e) Establish criteria or standards for approval of CUPs on steep slopes, potentially including:
 - Require lower density or larger lot sizes.
 - Establish a maximum impervious area.
 - Establish a maximum grading or land disturbance area relative to slope grade, where the amount of grading decreases as the slope increases.
 - Set a maximum amount of allowable tree or vegetation removal. (Note: Adopting a tree preservation ordinance is recommended in the *Natural Resources* plan element. Standards for tree removal on steep slopes could be more restrictive.)
 - Require use of earth toned building materials and prohibit use of reflective glass on buildings constructed on steep slopes.
 - Encourage use of “terrain-adaptive” architecture or require that buildings on steep slopes be sized and located to least disrupt the natural character of the hillside.
 - Limit structure height on steep slopes.
 - Prohibit any part of a building or structure (e.g. towers) from extending above the bluff line or coulee ridgeline silhouette.
 - Ensure, through building permit review, that the foundation and underlying material of any structure shall be adequate for the slope condition and soil type.
 - Ensure that the proposed development does not present any danger of falling rock, mud, uprooted trees, or other materials.
 - Ensure adequate provision for surface water runoff and temporary and permanent erosion and sedimentation control.
- f) Establish definitions in the zoning and subdivision ordinance (or Unified Development Ordinance) related to development on steep slopes. Some items that should be defined include:
 - Steep slopes (i.e., slopes with grades 20-30 percent over a minimum horizontal distance of 50 feet)
 - Very steep slopes (i.e., slopes with grades over 30 percent)
 - Bluff and/or bluff face
 - Bluff line and coulee ridge line
 - Clear cutting and/or selective cutting

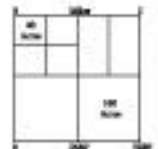
Such development controls are referred to as BMPs. Further discussion and detailed descriptions of BMPs is provided in the *Natural Resources* and *Public Utilities* plan elements.

Figure 4-5

***Sensitive
Natural
Resources***



-  *Municipal Boundary*
-  *Street*
-  *City of La Crosse*
-  *Water*
-  *Wetland Complex*
-  *Critical Rivers and Streams*
-  *LaCrosse Parks*
-  *Bluff Protection Area*
-  *Critical Slopes and Woodlands*



**City of
La Crosse
Comprehensive
Plan**

The may also want to consider utilizing other tools to control development on slopes 20-30 percent. Such tools might include Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), density bonuses, and conservation subdivisions. In fact, the City’s Draft Unified Development Code includes several overlay districts, some of which apply to floodplains and wetlands. Overlay districts impose restrictions on specific areas in addition to the regulations posed by the underlying zoning district. The City may want to consider creating an overlay district to protect bluff land and steep wooded coulee slopes.

2. **Property Acquisition.** The City shall continue to explore opportunities and support acquisition of private property in certain locations to protect significant natural resources from development.

A good example of this is the annual funding approved in 2000 to allow the City to purchase bluff land through the Mississippi Valley Conservancy, who will maintain easements on the land to protect it from development. In addition, the City recently acquired private property to expand Hixon Forest.

Objective 12: Brownfields. Clean and restore underutilized urban and riverfront properties to viable commercial, residential, or recreational uses.

La Crosse, like most older cities, contains underutilized or obsolete industrial sites that have great potential for redevelopment. However, many are considered “brownfields” and must be cleaned of contamination prior to redevelopment. *Brownfield* is the term commonly applied to a site or building that has been harmed by prior misuse of hazardous substances, including petroleum products or synthetic chemicals. Our understanding and regulation of these substances was poor for many decades, resulting in practices that would not be tolerated today.

Properties encumbered by soil or other contamination are a health hazard and are often difficult to use to their highest and best potential. The presence of environmental contamination in soil or a building is a major hindrance to its redevelopment or even its sale. This is because laws often state that the current owner of a site is liable for the cost of remediation even if he or she did not act to create it. Thus, lenders always require a variety of legal protections when working with such sites.

It is in the interest of the community, and often in the interest of the property owner, to resolve these problems. Financial assistance is available from federal and state agencies to help cities, counties and property owners identify and rank problems, determine how to reuse properties, and clean the properties.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Redevelopment Authority.** The City shall utilize the Redevelopment Authority to guide the identification, selection and redevelopment strategy for contaminated sites.
2. **Response Plan.** The Redevelopment Authority shall identify, assess and plan a response to properties located in La Crosse, especially in the Downtown or along the

Black River (e.g., Riverside Redevelopment Project Area), that may have or are perceived to have contamination that inhibits their redevelopment. This response may entail ranking contaminated properties in priority order and identifying specific steps to achieve clean up and redevelopment. In some cases property acquisition will be necessary to initiate and/or complete a redevelopment project.

3. **Program Funding.** The City shall create financial partnerships and leverage public and private funds to enhance the identification, assessment and redemption process. More specifically, the City will build programmatic and financial partnerships with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, local businesses, and banks.

Funding programs could include CDBG, TIF, capital budget funds, and others. The City can also apply for federal or state monies to capitalize a revolving loan fund that could be used by current or future property owners to remediate contamination on a given site.

4. **Business Assistance.** When the City and the Redevelopment Authority have clearly identified a high priority candidate site for reuse, the City shall use programs and funds at its disposal to assist businesses to:
 - Identify the type and extent of contamination
 - Prepare a cost-benefit analysis weighing the cost of cleanup against alternative future uses of the site. (Housing and industry have different remediation costs but provide different benefits.)
 - Clean up the property

5. **Site Preparation.** Once priorities and funding have been identified, the City shall take steps to initiate (or help property owners initiate) site preparation and redevelopment. These steps might include:
 - Street and/or public utility improvements.
 - Property consolidation and/or replatting.
 - Demolition of existing buildings and other structures.
 - Solicitation of site and building development plans.

Objective 13: Enhance Riverfront. Capitalize on opportunities to develop more parks, housing, and offices along the riverfront while continuing to accommodate river-dependent industries.

In recent years the City has made substantial improvements to public open space along the downtown riverfront. At the same time, significant private investments have been made in new riverfront residential, office, and commercial developments. While the riverfront continues to support industry, long-term shifts in the economy have opened opportunities to redevelop large areas of under-utilized industrial land adjacent to the riverfront. As riverfront redevelopment occurs, it will be important to continue to accommodate river-

dependent industries, but it will be equally important to capitalize on opportunities to create more parks and open space, housing, and offices that will enhance, and be enhanced by their location along the riverfront.



New CenturyTel offices on the riverfront

Policies/Actions:

1. **Desired Land Uses.** The City shall guide riverfront land use to river-dependent industries (e.g., barge terminals), parks, housing and offices through adoption of the Future Land Use Map, selective rezonings, brownfield clean up, and, in certain locations, public acquisition and resale.
2. **Redevelopment.** The City shall continue to direct public and private redevelopment efforts to several riverfront sites identified for potential redevelopment. These include:
 - **Riverside Redevelopment Area:** This area is bounded by State Street on the south, Causeway Boulevard on the north, the Mississippi and Black rivers on the west, and Fourth Street/Copeland Avenue on the east. It includes the Century-Tel/Riverplace development (recently cleaned), the area around the confluence of the La Crosse and Mississippi rivers, the Oktoberfest Grounds, part of Riverside Park and the Mobil Oil/Steel Supply/Western Wisconsin Ready Mix sites.
 - **Gateway Area:** This includes the area from Pearl Street south to Jackson between the Mississippi River and Seventh Street. The Common Council authorized the preparation of redevelopment plan for this area, including the use of tax-increment financing and other public redevelopment powers.
3. **Sensitive Riverfront Development.** Through its development review and building permit review process, the City shall ensure that development located on the riverfront is done in a manner that is sensitive to its riverfront environment. This will involve:
 - Siting structures and major landscaping to frame, and not obstruct views of the river;
 - Setback buildings 100 feet from the river edge to maintain a natural or green shoreline;

- Use landscape plantings that complement, enhance, or reestablish the native riverfront vegetation;
- Use building materials and designs that complement the riverfront environment;
- Establish landscape buffers along the river edge to guard against erosion, minimize run-off, and maintain a natural appearance, except in areas specifically intended for direct river access (e.g., boat dock/promenade);
- Incorporate BMPs in site design to ensure appropriate stormwater management and water quality.

Additional discussion of environmentally appropriate site and building design is included in the Urban Design, Natural Resources, and Public Utilities plan elements.

4. Parkland along the River. The City will continue to explore opportunities to acquire additional land or easements along the river edge to develop a connected system of public trails, walkways and open space along the edge of the Mississippi, Black, and La Crosse rivers. This could occur in conjunction with review and approval of development proposals. On properties that involve subdivision or replatting, it may be appropriate to acquire land for trails and open space connections through park dedication requirements.

In some cases, the City will need to take a more proactive stance and directly approach the property owner with a purchase offer. The City shall also explore other incentives it can offer private property owners in exchange for allowing public access on their riverfront property. Key riverfront open space connections are described in the Park and Open Space plan element.

5. Boathouses. Given the City’s lack of jurisdiction over this specific use, the City shall continue to defer to the WDNR regarding boathouses. There are several boathouse communities along the Mississippi River in La Crosse. While they lend a certain romantic charm and nostalgia to the City, they are also considered undesirable river uses by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, primarily due to concerns about water contamination, shoreline damage, and their potential to become hazards during floods. The Wisconsin DNR has jurisdiction over structures within the floodplain and has defined boathouses as non-conforming uses in order to phase them out.



Boathouses on the Black River near West Copeland Park

Objective 14: Enhance Urban Ecology. Establish a balance between the built and natural environment that embraces the natural features of La Crosse and provides a context for restoration of degraded properties.

La Crosse is located in an environment rich with natural resources that contribute to its image and have shaped its physical form. Enhancing these resources and integrating them into built areas can help re-establish links between built and natural environments in La Crosse. Strengthening connections between neighborhoods and the rivers and bluffs can improve the urban ecology of the City and provide a context for restoration of degraded properties.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Protect and Enhance the Urban Forest.** The urban forest, as it falls under the jurisdiction of the City, generally consists of trees along streets and in public parks, but in actuality also includes the many trees planted on private property. The urban forest is a dynamic resource that requires timely and consistent maintenance and proactive management to achieve its full potential. To ensure continued enhancement of the urban forest the City shall:
 - Provide consistent funding and staff resources for park and street tree maintenance.
 - Develop and implement a Master Street Tree Planting plan and program to guide the selection and planting of new and replacement trees and guard against mono-culture plantings.
 - Provide property owners with basic information on proper maintenance of boulevard trees. This might include periodic flyers sent with water bills that describe tree care and maintenance procedures that property owners can perform.
 - Amend the subdivision regulations to identify tree species that should not be planted.

- 2. Establish and Expand Environmental Corridors.** In addition to “green” corridors formed by tree-lined streets and off-road trails, wider environmental corridors play an important role in providing for wildlife movement through the City and creating ribbons of open space that link parks and other open spaces. To expand environmental corridors, the City shall:
 - Develop an inventory of vacant parcels suitable for corridors or corridor extensions and prioritize them for acquisition.
 - When possible, acquire property to establish or extend environmental corridors or trails through park dedication requirements.
 - Explore opportunities for direct purchase of private property.

It should be noted that the City has taken an important step to develop a major environmental corridor by collaborating with the Mississippi Valley Conservancy to purchase property along the bluff to establish a corridor of open space from County Highway B, through Hixon Forest, south to U.S. Highway 14/61. Existing and potential

trails and environmental corridors are further described in the Parks and Open Space plan element.

- 3. Natural Landscaping.** The City will encourage use of native or indigenous plant species in public and private development projects. This may require revisions to the landscape standards in the City’s Unified Development Code to allow use of native plants and, where appropriate, alternative forms of maintenance such as controlled prairie burns.

The City can set the example by implementing natural landscaping in select areas of public parks and on other public properties (e.g., City Hall, water treatment plant, etc.). Some areas could even be designed as demonstration projects.

- 4. Natural Storm Water Treatment.** The City will support use of bioengineering techniques to reduce storm water run-off and protect and enhance water resources. Such strategies may include use of “rain gardens”, bio-retention systems, pervious pavements, and vegetated rooftops. See the Natural Resources and Public Utilities plan elements for a more detailed discussion of natural storm water treatment.



A “rain garden” planting in a drainage swale

Plan Implementation

This plan emphasizes the need to focus on redevelopment to accommodate new growth in La Crosse and to consider expansion of the City on a limited and strategic basis. The challenge will be to work with surrounding communities to address future growth, investment in public infrastructure and facilities, and protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources. This will require effective communication and coordination between the City, County, and townships as well as effective tools to guide and regulate development.

Objective 15: Regional Coordination. Build regional land use planning relationships that help support coordinated and sustainable growth in the La Crosse and Coulee Region.

As the largest governmental unit in the region, La Crosse plays a lead role in coordination of planning and development throughout the Coulee region. As growth and development patterns shift, it will become increasingly important to build cooperative relationships that foster coordinated and sustainable growth in La Crosse and the Coulee region.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Regional Consistency.** The City shall continue to work with and encourage La Crosse County and surrounding townships (particularly Medary and Shelby) to adopt consistent land use controls and development standards regarding:
 - Preservation of agriculture
 - Protection of natural resources
 - Provision of public services and facilities (i.e., sewers, roads, schools)
 - Development density

- 2. Regional Planning and Leadership.** The City shall strive to promote intergovernmental cooperation and coordination regarding land use and planning through efforts to improve regional communication and build trust. In particular, the City shall continue to actively participate in intergovernmental discussions of regional planning issues through its involvement with the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, United Coulee Region, and others.

Objective 15: Implementation Tools. Develop and maintain planning and regulatory tools consistent with the policies outlined in this plan.

The City has several tools at its disposal to implement the actions described in *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan* and the land use pattern depicted on the Future Land Use Map. The primary tools include the “official” zoning map and the zoning and subdivision ordinances, which outline specific requirements and standards for land use and

development. To be effective, and to comply with Wisconsin planning legislation, the City’s implementation tools must be consistent with the objectives outlined in *Confluence*.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Zoning Map.** The City shall maintain an adopted official zoning map. Amendments to the official zoning map shall be consistent with the Future Land Use Map and the objectives of *Confluence*.
2. **Zoning Ordinance.** The City shall amend its Zoning Ordinance through adoption of the Unified Development Ordinance to achieve consistency with the objectives and actions outlined in *Confluence*. Key amendments include:
 - Adoption of building design guidelines and standards.
 - Adoption of landscape and screening standards.
 - Adoption of environmental protection standards consistent with accepted BMPs.
 - Establishment of a TND zoning district.
 - Establishment of a bluff protection overlay zoning district.
3. **Subdivision Regulations.** The City shall amend its Subdivision Ordinance through adoption of the Unified Development Ordinance to achieve consistency with the objectives and actions outlined in *Confluence*. Key amendments include:
 - Provisions to allow flexible development techniques such as cluster development and conservation subdivisions.
 - Design standards for narrower streets (particularly for local residential streets), including requirements for sidewalks, boulevard trees, and buried utilities.
 - Revisions to the park dedication requirement to increase the required cash dedication amount and establish criteria to evaluate the merits of land dedication proposals.

Objective 18: Planning and Regulatory Process. Maintain an open, fair planning and regulatory process that is consistent with other jurisdictions (county, state, federal).

Use this plan in conjunction with the tools identified above, as the basis for reviewing development applications and as a guide for preparing neighborhood or district plans.

Policies/Actions:

1. **City Review Process.** The City shall continue to make land use and development decisions in a reasonable, responsible, consistent manner based on the objectives outlined in *Confluence* and adopted ordinances.
2. **Extraterritorial Review Process.** The City has extra-territorial review jurisdiction on zoning within three miles of its corporate limits and on subdivision and platting activity within one and one-half miles of its limits. The City shall continue to use its

extraterritorial review powers to encourage development beyond the City limits that is consistent with the objectives of *Confluence*.

3. **Neighborhood and Special Area Plans.** In recent years the City has initiated a new approach to planning in La Crosse that directly involves residents in developing strategies to improve established neighborhoods. The City shall continue to assign funding and staff resources to neighborhood planning efforts.

To date, neighborhood plans have been completed for: Powell/Hood Park/Hamilton, Lower North Side, Goosetown/Campus, and Washburn neighborhoods. A more detailed discussion about neighborhood plans and priorities is included in the Neighborhoods and Housing plan element.

Objective 18: Local and Regional Investments. Invest in public facilities in a manner that maximizes their impact, minimizes duplication and advances the objectives of this plan.

Public spending is a powerful way to influence the pattern of land use and actions of private landowners and developers. Dollars spent on roads, utilities, parks and other facilities or services, all influence the value of land to some extent. Thus, an excellent way to implement this plan would be to ensure that public spending is consistent with plan objectives. *Confluence* should be the central guiding document for all long-term capital improvements programming in La Crosse.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Priorities.** High priority shall be given to maintenance and reinvestment in public streets, parks, utilities, and other City facilities to maximize the use of existing public investments. Secondly, public expenditures should be used to steer private investment to locations that will provide the greatest impact and best advance the objectives of this plan. Priority for investments in public infrastructure and facilities shall be given to:
 - Established neighborhoods, particularly locations supporting high concentrations of population and employment.
 - Targeted redevelopment areas.
 - Key activity centers, such as areas near major institutions and downtown.
 - Major public amenities and attractions.
2. **Fiscal Management Guidelines.** The City shall establish guidelines to measure the value of potential projects or services. Such guidelines could include:
 - Inform the community and obtain community input when financing capital projects.
 - Include cost-benefit analysis as part of each project. Benefits need to be well-defined and the analysis should look at the project from both a “good times” and “bad times” perspective.
 - Use benchmarking as a tool to measure financial performance and financial condition compared to other communities of comparable size.

- Establish a direct relationship between revenue sources or taxes and the service or value received.
- Link financing of projects to adopted plans.
- Consolidate services when possible to achieve economies of scale and efficiency.
- Identify and use several revenue sources to avoid becoming too dependent on any one source.
- Choose revenue sources that are consistent with the ethical standards and integrity of the community.

3. Capital Improvement Programming. The City shall establish a process for ranking all proposed capital projects based on consistency with the objectives in *Confluence*. This ranking process should use the plan’s objectives and priorities identified in the *Implementation* plan element as a starting point. Then consider mandates, prior commitments, project interrelationships and cost effectiveness to complete the ranking process.

While a perfect convergence of the plan and the capital improvements program may not emerge, a higher degree of consistency should result than if this plan were not formally considered at all. Following this disciplined process will foster greater recognition of the importance of *Confluence* in the minds of staff, local public officials, and the general public and also lead to regular, thoughtful plan amendments.

Implementation Program

This section describes the major actions involved in implementing the Land Use plan element. Table 4-6 is intended to guide City staff and the Common Council in setting priorities for capital budgeting and staff allocation. It is expected that this table will be reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, to establish new priorities. Numerous specific actions are described in the body of this plan, while the items listed below highlight the major actions.

Priority ranking is defined as follows:

- 1 = highest or short-term priority
- 2 = secondary or mid-term priority
- 3 = lowest priority or represents on-going activities

Table 4-6: Implementation Actions for Land Use

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	Plan Adoption: Formally adopt <i>Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan</i> as the City’s guiding document for land development and related infrastructure improvements.	Common Council Plan Commission Other advisory bodies
1	Amend Zoning Ordinance and Map: Incorporate the Zoning Ordinance into a Unified Development Ordinance and amend as necessary to incorporate the objectives outlined in <i>Confluence</i> . Key amendments include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt building design guidelines and standards. • Adopt landscape and screening standards. • Adopt environmental protection standards consistent with BMPs. • Create a TND zoning district. • Create Institutional Overlay District 	Common Council Plan Commission Planning Department
1	Amend Subdivision Ordinance: Incorporate the Subdivision Ordinance into a Unified Development Ordinance and amend as necessary to achieve consistency with the objectives outlined in <i>Confluence</i> . Key amendments include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish standards for flexible subdivision design (e.g., cluster subdivision) • Adopt design standards for narrower streets. • Adopt BMPs regarding storm water management. • Strengthen park dedication requirements. 	Common Council Plan Commission Planning Department Other City departments and advisory bodies

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	Neighborhood Plans: Continue to implement the recommendations in completed neighborhood plans. Work to implement on-going plans and continue to identify areas where neighborhood planning should be initiated.	Common Council Plan Commission Planning Department Neighborhood groups
1	Annexation Policy: Consistently enforce policy that the City will require annexation prior to extension of public utilities. Establish criteria to evaluate the merits of potential utility extensions and annexations.	Common Council Plan Commission Planning Department La Crosse County Sewer and Water Utility Various townships
1	Coulee Plans. Prepare development plans for Mormon Coulee (high priority) and Smith Valley following the process used in other neighborhood planning efforts.	Common Council Plan Commission Planning Department La Crosse County Various City departments
2	Redevelopment Efforts: Continue to utilize and explore funding and other incentives to encourage redevelopment, and infill development in older neighborhoods, along the riverfront, and downtown.	Common Council Plan Commission Planning Department La Crosse County Redevelopment Authority Historic Preservation Commission Attorney’s Office
2	Institutional Master Plans: Continue to work with major institutions and surrounding neighborhoods to develop plans for institutional growth and expansion. This is a requirement of the proposed Institutional Overlay zoning district.	Planning Department Various institutions Neighborhood groups Historic Preservation Commission Common Council Plan Commission
2	Riverfront Parkland: Continue to explore opportunities to acquire additional land or easements along the river edge to develop a connected system of public trails, walkways and open space along the Mississippi, Black, and La Crosse rivers.	Planning Department Parks Department Parks Commission Common Council Plan Commission
2	Establish and Expand Environmental Corridors: Continue to explore opportunities to acquire land or easements along the bluffs, rivers and other areas to create or extend linear corridors to facilitate wildlife movements and link parks and open spaces throughout the City and Coulee Region.	Planning Department Parks Department Parks Commission Common Council Plan Commission La Crosse County Various conservation groups and private property owners

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
2	Proactive Code Enforcement: Establish and maintain adequate staff and other resources to enable timely detection, response, and follow-up to property maintenance and code violations.	Building Inspections Police Department Fire Department Attorney’s Office Common Council
2	Rural Development Policies. Work with La Crosse County and surrounding townships to establish consistent rural development standards including large lot sizes and densities of one house per 35 acres in areas without sewers.	Common Council Plan Commission Planning Department La Crosse County Various townships
2	Brownfields. Work with the Redevelopment Authority to identify, assess and plan for clean-up and redevelopment of contaminated properties, particularly along the riverfront.	Common Council Plan Commission Planning Department Redevelopment Authority Other City departments
2	Natural Resources Inventory and Map. Work with La Crosse County to develop and maintain an inventory map and database of natural resources.	Planning Department La Crosse County Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2	Fiscal Management Guidelines. Establish guidelines to measure the value of potential City projects or services.	Common Council Various City departments
3	Intergovernmental Coordination: Continue to coordinate planning efforts with adjacent cities and townships, La Crosse County, the La Crosse Area Planning Commission, and local offices of state and federal agencies.	All City departments Common Council Plan Commission
3	Extra-Territorial Review. Continue to utilize extra-territorial powers to encourage rural development that is consistent with <i>Confluence</i> .	Planning Department Common Council Plan Commission La Crosse County Planning Department Various townships
3	Neighborhood Improvement Incentives. Continue to support programs aimed at improving neighborhoods and the public realm, such as: adopt-a-block, community clean-up events, and the Neighborhood RENEW program.	Various City departments Various advisory bodies Common Council
3	Implement City Vision and Downtown Improvements. Continue to make downtown improvements consistent with <i>City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update</i> .	Planning Department Plan Commission Historic Preservation Commission Common Council

Appendix A

Land Use Categories

The proposed future land use pattern is comprised of seventeen land use categories. Many of the categories provide for mixed-use areas that better reflect the current land use pattern in the established areas of the City. These categories are described below with corresponding guidelines and locational criteria to establish development appropriate to specific areas. Specific development requirements are described and regulated by the zoning ordinance, which is the primary implementation tool of the Land Use plan element. Each of the land use category descriptions identifies corresponding zoning districts that should generally be appropriate in that area. However, the appropriateness of any rezoning request must be considered on a case-specific basis, relative to the unique circumstances and character of the area.

Residential Land Uses

Of all the land use categories, residential land uses occupy the most land area. Figure 4-1, the Future Land Use Map, reflects the wide variety of housing opportunities that currently exists in La Crosse. While some residential land uses may occur in mixed-use areas, the four categories described below are predominantly residential.

Fringe Residential Housing (FRH)

The Fringe Residential Housing (FRH) designation provides for compact and environmentally sensitive residential development in the coulee areas, including areas that are not currently within the City limits. Development in these areas should be done in a manner that minimizes impacts to the valued aesthetic and environmental quality of the wooded slopes, bluff-tops, and trout streams. Compact development will also allow for efficient use of limited developable land and cost-effective infrastructure investments.

Guidelines and Criteria

Minimum Density:	2.5 dwellings per gross acre
Maximum Density:	4 dwellings per acre; however, higher density and mixed use development may be allowed through a Planned Unit Development (PUD). In areas without public utilities, density should be limited to a maximum of one dwelling per 35 acres.
City Utilities:	Required for all areas.
Types of Development:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single family detached housing

- Single family attached housing (locally known as “Twindominiums”)
- Two-family dwellings (PUD only)
- Townhouses (PUD only)
- Neighborhood retail or service (PUD only)

Development and
Location Criteria:

- Development on bluffs or coulee slopes should be visually obscure to maintain the natural quality of the view shed
- Structures should not extend above the bluff line
- Use BMPs to protect sensitive resources
- Single family and duplexes should have access on local streets
- Individual duplex and/or townhome buildings should not become islands in a block of single family homes. Generally, they should be located on block corners and/or along the edges of single family blocks.
- All non-single family development, shall be subject to architectural and site design guidelines.

Desirable Facilities:

- Neighborhood parks, school parks or mini parks within ½ mile walking distance
- Defined trail system that connects neighborhoods to services and facilities
- Interconnected network of streets and sidewalks

Corresponding
Zoning Districts:

R-1, R-CL, PUD

Single Family Housing (SF)

The Single Family Housing designation provides for areas consisting predominantly of single-family housing (detached and attached) and complementary public and institutional uses such as churches, schools, parks and recreational facilities. The City recognizes the need to protect and maintain areas of single family housing to meet market demand for stable residential neighborhoods.

Guidelines and Criteria

Minimum Density: 3 dwellings per gross acre

Maximum Density: 5 dwellings per gross acre; however, mixed use development may be allowed through a PUD.

City Utilities: Required for all areas.

Types of Development:

- Single-family detached housing
- Single family attached housing (locally known as “Twindominiums”)
- Public facilities and institutions (school, church, parks)
- Mixed use (PUD only)

Development and Location Criteria:

- Residential access on local streets
- Near neighborhood shopping and services
- All new non-single family development, shall be subject to architectural and site design guidelines.

Desirable Facilities:

- Neighborhood parks, school parks or mini parks within ½ mile walking distance
- Defined trail system that connects neighborhoods to services and facilities
- Interconnected network of streets and sidewalks

Corresponding

Zoning Districts: R-CL, R-1, PUD

Low and Medium Density Housing (L/MR)

The Low and Medium Density Housing designation provides for areas with a variety of housing types including, single family on small lots, duplexes, triplexes, and carefully integrated four to six-unit dwellings and townhouses. This category is intended to provide housing opportunities for people at various stages in their life cycle. As in the Single Family areas, complementary public and institutional uses such as churches, schools, parks and recreational facilities are appropriate.

Guidelines and Criteria

Minimum Density: 4 dwellings per gross acre

Maximum Density: 10 dwellings per gross acre; however, multi-unit buildings should not have more than 6 housing units per building.

City Utilities: Required for all areas.

Types of Development:

- Single family detached housing
- Two-family dwellings
- Triplex dwelling

- Four to six unit dwellings
- Townhouses and small apartment buildings
- Public facilities and institutions (school, church, parks)
- Mixed use (PUD only)

Development and
Location Criteria:

- Lower density residential dwellings should have access from local streets
- Buildings with more than 4 units should be located near intersections or along busier roads
- Primary building entrances should face the street front.
- All new non-single family development shall be subject to architectural and site design guidelines to ensure compatibility with neighborhood character
- Near neighborhood shopping and services
- Buildings oriented to the street with doors and windows facing street
- Parking located behind or to the side of buildings
- Nearby or easily accessible public transit facilities

Desirable Facilities:

- Neighborhood parks, school parks or mini parks within ½ mile walking distance
- Defined trail system that connects neighborhoods to services and facilities
- Interconnected network of streets and sidewalks
- Neighborhood oriented retail and services
- Within ½ mile walking distance of public transit facilities

Corresponding

Zoning Districts: R-CL, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, PUD

Medium and High Density Housing (M/HR)

The Medium- and High-Density Housing designation is similar to the L/MR category, except it provides for higher density. This land use category may function as a buffer between predominantly single family and non-residential land uses. This land use is generally located in areas with a high amount of activity, good traffic access and amenities, such as around major institutions and larger parks.

Guidelines and Criteria

Minimum Density: 6 dwellings per gross acre; density is expected to typically be greater than 10 units per acre

Maximum Density: None

City Utilities: Required for all areas.

Types of Development:

- Six or more unit dwellings
- Multiple-family dwellings (e.g., senior housing, apartments, townhouses and similar attached housing)
- Public facilities and institutions (school, church, parks)
- Mixed use (PUD only)

Development and Location Criteria:

- Abuts or has reasonably direct access to major collector and arterial roadways
- Near neighborhood and community shopping facilities and services
- Buildings oriented to the street with doors and windows facing street
- Parking located behind or to the side of buildings
- New multiple-unit buildings subject to architectural and site design guidelines to ensure compatibility with neighborhood character
- Within ½ mile walking distance of public transit facilities

Desirable Facilities:

- Pedestrian amenities
- Neighborhood parks, school parks or mini parks within ½ mile walking distance
- Defined trail system that connects neighborhoods to services and facilities
- Interconnected network of streets and sidewalks

Corresponding Zoning Districts: R-4, R-5, R-6, PUD

Mixed Land Uses

Many of the older, established neighborhoods of La Crosse contain a mix of housing and commercial land uses, reflecting historical development patterns. Concentrations of retail and service land uses developed at intersections or along a stretch of block surrounded by housing. These commercial nodes were convenient to residents who often established a local clientele for neighborhood businesses. Areas with established mixed land uses tend to be concentrated around downtown and along the historic highway routes running through La Crosse, such as George St. and West Ave.

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)

The TND designation provides for a mix of housing types and densities along with small-scale retail and service businesses. Some commercial buildings may have businesses on the ground level and housing (or office) above. This designation encompasses existing traditional neighborhoods as well as high-amenity or high-activity locations near downtown and major institutions.

Guidelines and Criteria

Minimum Density: 4 dwellings per acre

Maximum Density: 15 dwellings per acre

City Utilities: Required for all areas.

Types of Development:

- Single-family homes on small lots
- Single-family attached housing
- Duplexes
- Multiple-family dwellings (e.g., senior housing, apartments, townhouses and similar attached housing)
- Public facilities and institutions (school, church, neighborhood parks)
- Mixed use development
- Neighborhood retail and service

Development and Location Criteria:

- Narrow streets, include sidewalks and boulevard trees
- Buildings generally set close to street with doors and windows facing street
- Parking located behind or to the side of buildings
- Close proximity to major employment areas
- Close proximity to neighborhood commercial nodes
- New non-single family development subject to architectural and site design guidelines to ensure compatibility with neighborhood character
- Within ½ mile walking distance of public transit facilities

Desirable Facilities:

- Pedestrian amenities and streetscaping
- Neighborhood parks, school parks or mini parks within ½ mile walking distance

Corresponding Zoning Districts: TND (new), PUD

Medium Intensity Retail, Office or Housing (MRO)

The Medium Intensity Retail, Office or Housing (MRO) designation allows for a variety of commercial and/or medium-density housing located at major intersections and along major road corridors. Housing may be combined in the same building or closely integrated on the same site with retail or office uses.

Guidelines and Criteria

Minimum Density: 8 dwellings per acre

Maximum Density: None

City Utilities: Required for all areas.

Types of Development:

- Multiple-family dwellings (e.g., senior housing, apartments, townhouses and similar attached housing)
- Mixed use development
- Neighborhood and community-oriented retail and service
- Office (up to 5,000 s.f. in area)

Development and Location Criteria:

- Generally adjacent to major road corridors and major intersections
- Reasonably direct access to arterial roadways
- May be adjacent to low-density residential areas, if appropriate scale and buffering provided (e.g., landscaping, fencing, setbacks)
- Residential uses should be near parks or other amenities
- Close proximity to major employment areas
- New development subject to architectural and site design guidelines to ensure compatibility with neighborhood character
- Within ½ mile walking distance of public transit facilities

Desirable Facilities:

- Attractive pedestrian spaces and streetscapes
- Shared, private or public open space
- Connected trail system

Corresponding

Zoning Districts: R-4, R-5, R-6, NB, LB, CB, PUD

High Intensity Retail, Office or Housing (HRO)

The HRO designation is similar to the MRO designation but allows for higher residential densities and more intense commercial land uses. This land use is concentrated at major intersections, along major road corridors, abutting downtown and near major institutions. Housing may be combined in the same building or closely integrated on the same site with retail or office uses.

Guidelines and Criteria

Minimum Density: 10 dwellings per acre

Maximum Density: None

City Utilities: Required for all areas.

Types of Development:

- Multiple-family dwellings (e.g., senior housing, apartments, townhouses and similar attached housing)
- Mixed use development
- Neighborhood and community-oriented retail and service
- Office (up to 10,000 s.f. in area)

Development and Location Criteria:

- Generally adjacent to major road corridors and at major intersections
- Reasonably direct access to arterial roadways
- Close proximity to major employment areas
- New development subject to architectural and site design guidelines to ensure compatibility with neighborhood character
- Easy access to public transit facilities
- Residential uses should be near parks or other amenities

Desirable Facilities:

- Attractive pedestrian spaces and streetscapes
- Shared, private or public open space
- Connected trail system

Corresponding Zoning Districts: R-5, R-6, LB, CB, C, PUD

Commercial Land Uses

Many of the older commercial areas in La Crosse are integrated into residential neighborhoods creating traditional commercial nodes and district, such as the Caledonia

Street commercial area. However, in some areas, while residential uses may be present, commercial uses clearly dominate. For example, while downtown contains a mix of uses, the City is interested in retaining and enhancing its role as the commercial (particularly office) and entertainment heart of the region. Similarly, Mormon Coulee Road, south of Ward Avenue (Shelby Mall area) is dominated by retail shopping land uses.

Downtown (DT)

The Downtown designation allows and promotes high-intensity office, retail, housing, entertainment, hotel, convention and public land uses. To achieve compact development and support pedestrian activity, mixed-use buildings are preferred over single-use buildings. In the Downtown area high priority is placed on maintaining and enhancing public amenities and pedestrian facilities, such as attractive streetscaping and plazas.

Guidelines and Criteria

Minimum Residential Density: 15 dwellings per acre

Maximum Residential Density: None

Floor-to-Area Ratio: 1.0 to 8.0

City Utilities: Required for all areas.

- Types of Development:
- Offices, including government offices
 - Retail and service
 - Restaurants, entertainment
 - Hotel and convention facilities
 - Institutions (schools, colleges, churches, museums)
 - Multiple-family dwellings (e.g., senior housing, apartments, townhouses and similar attached housing)
 - Mixed use development, including upper floor apartments
 - River-dependent industry (e.g., barge terminal)

- Development and Location Criteria:
- Encompasses existing downtown and riverfront area
 - New development subject to architectural and site design guidelines to ensure compatibility with historic district and character
 - Within ¼ mile walking distance of public transit facilities

Desirable Facilities:

- Attractive pedestrian spaces and streetscapes (i.e., street trees, decorative lighting and pavements, etc.)
- Well designed way-finding signage system
- Shared, private or public open space
- Connected riverfront trail systems

Corresponding
Zoning Districts:

R-5, R-6, CB, C, LI, PUD

Commercial (C)

The Commercial designation provides for a variety of commercial uses to serve a range of markets and consumers, including convenience-oriented, neighborhood, community, highway, and regional shopping needs. These areas are dominated by commercial uses and depend on access to major transportation routes.

Guidelines and Criteria

City Utilities: Required for all areas.

Types of Development:

- Retail and service
- Hotels and motels
- Motor vehicle sales and repair
- Restaurants, entertainment and convention facilities

Development and
Location Criteria:

- Abuts or has reasonably direct access to arterial roadways
- Adjoining other business or industrial areas
- Adjacent to high density housing areas
- Requires effective buffering and transition when adjacent to use of less intensity
- Good access by public transit

Desirable Facilities:

- Attractive pedestrian spaces and streetscapes
- Well landscaped site
- Attractive and modest signs
- Effective access management

Corresponding
Zoning Districts:

NB, LB, C, PUD

Industrial Land Uses

Industrial land provides significant opportunities for employment and tax base. Good transportation access is particularly important to industrial uses, which are generally located near major transportation facilities. Historically, industry located near rail lines and along riverfronts to take advantage of freight rail and barge transport. Today, freeways and airports play important transportation roles in supporting industry. Shifts in technology, particularly the use of electronic information, have given rise to lighter industries and business and technology centers. As a result, industrial land uses can vary significantly in character. This is reflected in the variety of industrial designations described below.

Business Park (BP)

The Business Park designation provides for office-showroom and light industrial buildings in landscaped “campus” settings with well-screened truck docks and no outdoor storage. Offices are allowed only in conjunction with other light industrial activities such as manufacturing. Pure office buildings should be concentrated in downtown. This designation is intended to provide for a more attractive alternative to conventional light industrial areas.

City Utilities: Required for all areas.

Types of Development:

- Office-warehouse and office-showrooms
- High-tech industries

Development and Location Criteria:

- Business or technology park has reasonably direct access to arterial roadways and the airport
- May be located adjacent to commercial or mixed use areas
- May be located adjacent to high- or medium-density housing areas
- Requires effective buffering and transition when adjacent to use of less intensity
- Subject to building, site and landscape design guidelines
- Use BMPs to integrate site development with natural environment
- Truck docks screened from street view

Desirable Facilities:

- Well-landscaped campus setting
- Attractive pedestrian spaces and integrated trail systems
- Nearby natural amenities, such as wetlands, streams and woodlands
- Nearby restaurants and services (e.g., day care)

Corresponding
Zoning Districts: C, LI, PUD

Light Industry (LI)

The Light Industry designation provides for a variety of industrial uses that do not generate heavy truck traffic, noise, odors, or require excessive outdoor storage of raw materials. Offices are allowed only as a secondary or support use to the light industrial activities.

City Utilities: Required for all areas.

Types of Development:

- Manufacturing and assembly
- Warehousing
- Wholesaling

Development and
Location Criteria:

- Reasonably direct access to arterial roadways and the airport
- May be located adjacent to high-intensity commercial or mixed use areas
- Requires effective buffering and careful attention to site and building design if adjacent to less intense land uses
- Subject to building, site and landscape design guidelines
- Use BMPs to integrate site development with natural environment

Desirable Facilities:

- Attractive pedestrian spaces and integrated trail systems
- Nearby natural amenities, such as wetlands, streams and woodlands
- Nearby restaurants and services (e.g., day care)

Corresponding
Zoning Districts: LI, PUD

General Industry (GI)

The General Industrial designation provides for industrial uses that typically involve railroad service, heavy truck traffic, extensive outdoor storage, noise or odors, and the handling of raw materials. It also includes railroad yards, barge terminals, outdoor truck parking, power plants and sewage treatment plants.

City Utilities: Required for all areas.

Types of Development:

- Heavy manufacturing
- Truck terminals and storage yards
- Railroad yards
- Power plants [should these be public facilities?]

Development and Location Criteria:

- Reasonably direct access to arterial roadways, rail lines and barge terminals
- May be located adjacent to high intensity commercial or other industrial areas
- Requires effective buffering and careful attention to site and building design if adjacent to less intense land uses

Desirable Facilities:

- Attractive pedestrian spaces and integrated trail systems
- Nearby natural amenities, such as wetlands, streams and woodlands
- Nearby restaurants and services (e.g., day care)

Corresponding

Zoning Districts:

GI, PUD

Community Facility Land Uses

Community facilities consist of public, semi-public, and private institutional, governmental and recreational uses such as schools, libraries, fire stations, parks and recreation facilities. These uses contribute to the creation of a healthy, well-balanced community. Some churches, parks, and elementary schools can be suitably located in residential neighborhoods. Community facilities that generate a lot of traffic or noise may be appropriate near major roads or near high activity areas.

Public and Semi-Public Facilities (PF)

This land use designation provides for a variety of public, semi-public and private schools, public buildings, churches, cemeteries and hospitals. Access requirements generally relate to the size of the facility and the population they serve. Generally smaller facilities that serve neighborhood residents are best located in the heart of a neighborhood. Larger facilities that generate significant traffic or include large buildings may require careful design and buffering when adjacent to less-intense land uses.

Guidelines and Criteria

City Utilities:

Required for all areas.

Types of Development:

- Public and private schools
- Colleges and universities
- Technical schools
- Churches
- Government buildings
- Hospitals and clinics

Development and Location Criteria:

- Safe pedestrian access is a priority (provision of sidewalks, cross-walks, etc.)
- Larger facilities should have reasonably direct access to major roadways
- New buildings subject to architectural design guidelines to ensure compatibility with character of surrounding area
- Larger facilities should be located within ½ mile walking distance of public transit facilities

Desirable Facilities:

- Near bicycle trails and routes
- Provision of pedestrian and bicycle support facilities, such as benches, bike racks and bike lockers

Corresponding Zoning Districts:

P/PS

Parks and Conservancy (PK)

This land use designation provides for public parks and outdoor recreational facilities such as public golf courses. It also includes publicly-owned areas intended for passive recreation and natural resource protection, such as Hixon Forest.

Guidelines and Criteria

City Utilities: Required for all areas with restrooms

Types of Development:

- Public parks and playgrounds
- Public outdoor recreation facilities, including public golf courses
- Public trails
- Nature preserves and wildlife areas

Development and
Location Criteria:

- Varies by type and size of park facility
- Safe pedestrian access is a priority (provision of sidewalks, cross-walks, etc.)
- Providing trail connections and continuity is a priority
- Larger facilities should have reasonably direct access to major roadways and provide for adequate parking
- Larger facilities may need to buffer adjacent residential land uses from noise, lights, and other elements
- New buildings subject to architectural design guidelines to ensure compatibility with character of surrounding area
- Use of BMPs to protect sensitive natural resources

Desirable Facilities:

- Larger facilities should be located within ½ mile walking distance of public transit facilities

Corresponding
Zoning Districts:

P/SP and Conservancy

Resource-Based Land Uses

La Crosse is graced with significant natural resources. The most prominent resources include the rivers, bluffs, wetlands and trout streams. While most of the natural areas in La Crosse are publicly owned, there are significant areas of private property that are protected from development because of regulations intended to minimize impacts to steep slopes, woodlands, wetlands and streams. Farms are located east of the City in valley bottoms and along the flat ridge tops.

Wooded and/or Steep Slopes (WS)

This land use designation encompasses private property that is undeveloped and is reserved for open space through development restrictions, public easements or other means, such as the bluffs. It also includes private property used for public recreation or open space, such as privately owned golf courses.

Guidelines and Criteria

City Utilities: NA

Types of Development: Mostly undeveloped, however, may include trails for public use, limited interpretive, picnic and parking areas

Development and Location Criteria:

- Depends on location of resource
- Safe pedestrian access is a priority
- Providing trail connections and continuity is a priority
- Larger facilities intended for public use should have reasonably direct access to major roadways and provide for adequate parking
- Use of BMPs to protect sensitive natural resources

Desirable Facilities: Footpaths, if the land has public access easement

Corresponding Zoning Districts: All residential zoning districts, P/SP, Conservancy

Wetlands (W)

This land use designation includes public and private land determined to be a wetland or floodplain under the state or federal regulations, and protected from development.

Guidelines and Criteria

City Utilities: NA

Types of Development: Wetlands: Generally not developed; however, may include trails, boat landings, viewing platforms and other limited facilities intended for public use
 Floodplains: Some buildings are allowed under floodplain regulations

Development and Location Criteria:

- Depends on location of resource
- Safe pedestrian access is a priority
- Providing trail connections and continuity is a priority
- Larger facilities intended for public use should have reasonably direct access to major roadways and provide for adequate parking
- Use of BMPs to protect sensitive natural resources

Desirable Facilities: Trails, boardwalks, boat/canoe landings, viewing platforms, provided they are designed in an unobtrusive manner.

Corresponding Zoning Districts: Conservancy
 SW (Shoreland-Wetland District)
 FW (Floodway District)

FS-Overlay
FF-Overlay
FSD-Overlay
FPC-Overlay

Agricultural and Rural Residential (A)

The Agricultural designation includes land used for farming and farmsteads. This area provides for retention of active farming and preservation of rural character. Non-farm activities and development are discouraged by requiring very large lot sizes.

Guidelines and Criteria

Minimum Density	One dwelling per 35 acres
City Utilities:	Not required
Types of Development:	Farms and farmstead dwellings Single family dwellings (large lot)
Development and Location Criteria:	Located outside urban sewer service area or in areas difficult to serve with utilities
Corresponding Zoning Districts:	R-AG County zoning: Exclusive Ag Agricultural “A” and “B” Transitional Agriculture

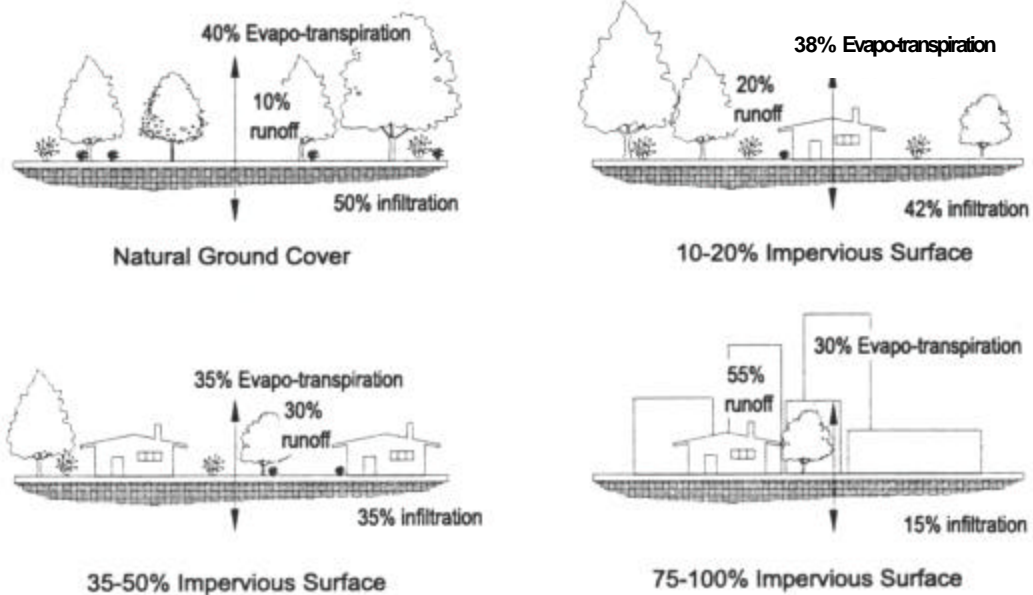
Appendix B

Low Impact Development and Conservation Design Techniques

Certain methods can be used to mimic the predevelopment site hydrology and watershed’s natural hydrologic function. The following techniques may be used to reduce water runoff and boost groundwater recharge by creating a balance between runoff, infiltration, storage, groundwater recharge and evapotranspiration. With this approach, receiving waters may experience fewer negative impacts in the volume, frequency and quality of water runoff so as to maintain base flows and more closely approximate predevelopment runoff conditions.

The following list is comprehensive but may not be complete.

- Limit impervious surfaces created by driveways.
- Create natural resource areas.
- Minimize disturbance and compaction to site, then loosen soils after construction is complete. Preserve infiltratable soils.
- Preserve natural depression areas and topography.
- Use vegetated swales, on-site bio-retention, wider and flatter swales, maintain sheet flow, and clusters of trees and shrubs in flow path.
- Maximize tree preservation or forestation.
- Use native vegetation that have deeper roots, more water uptake, or better water evapo-transpiration.
- Minimize storm drainpipes.
- Use filter and buffer strips, swales: grass, and infiltration trenches.



Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

5.0 Transportation Plan Element

URS

Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION ISSUES	2
LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION	2
GUIDANCE FROM THE CONCEPT PLAN	5
OVERVIEW OF THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN.....	6
A SMART GROWTH APPROACH TO TRANSPORTATION PLANNING	6
SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES	9
TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	11
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT	11
ROADWAY SYSTEM DESIGN.....	29
ROADWAY JURISDICTION	31
ALTERNATIVE MODE CHOICES	46
COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND REGIONAL MODES	52

List of Figures

FIGURE 5-1 COULEE VISION'S PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES	8
FIGURE 5-2 CRASH DATA AND STREET GEOMETRY.....	15
FIGURE 5-3 ACCESS MANAGEMENT LOCATIONS	21
FIGURE 5-4 PARKING STRUCTURES DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT	24
FIGURE 5-5 ORIENT BUILDINGS TOWARD THE STREET	25
FIGURE 5-6 FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION AND NHS.....	33
FIGURE 5-7 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS	37
FIGURE 5-8 COMBINE STREETScape ENHANCEMENTS WITH ACCESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES.....	36
FIGURE 5-9 ARTERIAL AND COLLECTOR STREET CROSS SECTIONS	41
FIGURE 5-10 YIELD, SLOW AND FREE FLOW LANES	39
FIGURE 5-11 LOCAL STREET DESIGN CROSS SECTIONS.....	40
FIGURE 5-12 PROPOSED MULTI-USE TRAILS AND BICYCLE ROUTES.....	45
FIGURE 5-13 COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION MODES	51

List of Tables

Table 5-1: Selected High Accident Intersections	13
Table 5-2: Access Management Classification System and Spacing Guidelines.	20
Table 5-3: La Crosse Urbanized Area Functional Classification Mileage	29
Table 5-4: General Characteristics of Functional Classification System	28
Table 5-5: AASHTO Minimum Street Design Guideline Summary	39
Table 5-6: Implementation Plan	60

Appendices

Appendix A: A Smart Growth Approach to Transportation Planning

- Figure 5A-1 Transportation Land Use Relationship
- Figure 5A-2 Conventional Development and Traditional Development
- Figure 5A-3 Grid Street vs. Conventional Street
- Figure 5A-4 Development on Grid vs. Conventional Street Pattern
- Figure 5A-5 Conventional Approach to Transportation Planning
- Figure 5A-6 Multi-modal Approach to Transportation Planning
- Figure 5A-7 Levels of Service Descriptions
- Figure 5A-8 Detail A to D: 1999 AADT & Level of Service
- Figure 5A-9 Detail A: 2020 Travel Demand Forecast & Level of Service
- Figure 5A-10 Induced Traffic
- Figure 5A-11 Traffic Calming Strategy Examples

Appendix B: La Crosse North-South Transportation Corridor Study

- Figure 5B-1 LAPC/WISDOT Recommended North-South Corridor

Appendix C: Three-Lane Road Configurations: Feasibility Determination Factors, Characteristics, and Sample Evaluation Criteria

- Table 5C-1 Feasibility Determination Factor of Characteristics and Sample Evaluation Criteria

La Crosse Transportation Plan Element

The Transportation Plan presents a framework for guiding development and improvements to the transportation system over the next 10 to 20 years. Accommodating new growth and redevelopment depends on good access as well as safe and uncongested transportation routes.

The transportation system in La Crosse has been shaped by the unique geographic features of the area. The rivers led to the development of the City's water transportation, a major factor in the establishment and growth of La Crosse. The traditional grid-pattern street system offers optimum capacity, direct routes, and a pedestrian-friendly environment in most neighborhoods and in the downtown area. The City also enjoys a higher than average rate of walk and bike commuting and good transit use compared with similar cities. These assets provide a solid foundation to build on.

Of course there are transportation challenges as well. Perhaps the most contentious of these is how best to address north-south traffic movement through the City. This problem is exacerbated by the presence of the La Crosse River Marsh, which bisects the City, constricting north-south traffic movements to three arterial roads.

The Transportation Plan identifies strategies for creating a fiscally sound transportation system that offers choices for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods while enhancing neighborhood livability and the quality of residential life. The main elements include:

- Managing congestion,
- Creating environments that offer viable alternatives to driving while reducing travel distances,
- Implementing transportation policies that enhance neighborhood livability,
- Maximizing use and efficiency of existing investments and reducing future infrastructure construction, reconstruction, and maintenance costs.
- Improving safety and mobility.

Summary of Transportation Issues

The following discussion provides a summary of the major transportation issues identified in the *Analysis of Conditions and Identification of Issues*. These issues address the transportation system as a whole and all major transportation modes. Many of the transportation challenges facing the community are unique to La Crosse as a result of its geography.

Land Use and Transportation Coordination

Over the past several decades, vehicle miles of travel have continued to outpace population and employment growth throughout the country. While this phenomenon is the result of many factors, the primary cause relates to land uses. Segregated land uses and auto-oriented developments have created environments that require more and longer driving trips. The connection between land use and transportation can no longer be ignored. As a result, the City of La Crosse will have to ask the following question:

- How should land use decisions be coordinated with decisions about the transportation system?

Transportation System

The transportation system consists of all the various transportation modes, services and facilities that involve the movement of people and goods. These include: roadways, pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, transit, rail, airport, waterways, and parking. Questions regarding the whole transportation system that must be addressed include:

- What aspects of the transportation system should be given priority in terms of focusing and allocating resources to address them?
- What can the City do to promote and encourage an even greater use of transportation alternatives (e.g., biking, walking, transit)?

Roadways: The most obvious, and most costly, component of the transportation system is the roadway network. Roads are not merely a city interest, but often serve a regional and even national function. As such, federal, state and county governments have jurisdiction over various segments of the roadway network. Similarly, roadways serve different functions that impact their use and design.

- To what extent are members of the community willing to make changes in land use and/or travel behaviors to reduce the need for more and/or wider roads?
- What sacrifices or tradeoffs, if any, is the community willing to make in terms of land development or neighborhood quality to improve auto movement by building more or wider roads?

- What level of access management should be implemented and on what portion of the transportation system (e.g., all access, near intersections, by type of land use)?

Pedestrians: Almost all trips have a pedestrian component, whether it be walking from the grocery store to the car in the parking lot, walking from the dorm room to class at the university, or walking from the bus stop to home after work. While pedestrian trips may seem inconsequential, they often make up a significant percentage of all trips. Similar to roads, pedestrian facilities (e.g., sidewalks) must be viewed as a system. Gaps in the pedestrian system can make walking difficult or uncomfortable, and thereby discourage walking. Pedestrian safety is especially important given that unsupervised children make up a significant portion of the pedestrian population.

- Under what circumstances, if any, should sidewalk requirements be waived: Should more effort be made to connect sidewalks and pedestrian facilities between subdivisions?

Transit: The Municipal Transit Utility (MTU) provides a valued service, particularly for those who cannot drive. However, public transit providers face many challenges. Some of the challenges are the direct result of City policies such as zoning requirements that prescribe auto-oriented development or facilitate the segregation of land uses.

- How can the existing public transit system be improved to better serve the transportation needs of the community, particularly those without cars?
- What improvements or incentives, if any, should the City provide to encourage more transit use?

Bicycle Facilities: Bicycling can be used for transportation as well as recreation. The bicycle network should allow bicyclists to travel safely with relative ease throughout the area, particularly to major destinations such as colleges, employment sites, public services, and commercial centers.

- How can the bicycle network be improved to provide better connectivity within the community and between neighboring communities?
- What infrastructure is needed to increase bicycle use for both transportation and recreation?

Parking: Parking management strategies can greatly impact commuter behavior and maximize accessibility for visitors and shoppers. Providing parking facilities (e.g., parking structures, surface parking lots) is expensive, particularly in older, developed areas of the City where existing development might need to be removed to create new parking areas.

- Are current parking requirements in the zoning code appropriate or flexible enough to meeting parking demands without negatively impacting surrounding areas?

- Should parking be free of charge to users and if so, how should the costs associated with building and operating parking facilities be paid for?

Rail, Air and Waterways: Good inter-regional transportation is necessary to maintain a strong economy. La Crosse is served by both freight and passenger rail service, a regional airport, and barge terminals.

- Does freight rail activity negatively impact the community or certain neighborhoods? If so, how can the impacts be mitigated?
- What should the City do, if anything, to improve passenger rail service in La Crosse? How should the City participate, if at all, in the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative?
- What are the benefits and costs associated with airport improvements and its increasing regional significance?
- How can a safe balance be maintained between the needs of commercial and industrial use of the river and the growing demand for recreational activities and access to the riverfront?



Geographic features, such as rivers and bluffs, affect the transportation system.

Guidance from the Concept Plan

The Concept Plan recommended that neighborhood revitalization be the general focus of *Confluence*. The Concept Plan emphasizes improving existing streets by minimizing the negative impacts of traffic while enhancing neighborhood livability through access management, appearance, and promoting alternative transportation modes. The Concept Plan also recommends creating a transportation system that supports compact growth, safeguards the natural environment, captures regional growth and promotes regional planning.

The Concept Plan provides the following direction regarding the transportation system:

- **Existing Streets:** The City should focus public investment on improving the existing street network to enhance safety, through-movement, traffic dispersion, and minimize negative transportation impacts to neighborhoods through traffic calming. The City should work to minimize transportation impacts to the natural environment.
- **Access Management:** Access should be managed on streets to improve traffic flow, safety and road capacity, always with a concern for neighborhood livability.
- **Appearance:** The City should work to improve the appearance of the street and road system through landscaping, lighting and site planning.
- **Bicycling:** The City should take a proactive role in implementing a city-wide network of bicycle facilities serving both recreational and utilitarian purposes. The City should require that bicycle facilities be installed with most new arterial or collector roads.
- **Walking:** The City should take a proactive role in improving the sidewalk network and pedestrian streetscape amenities.
- **Transit:** Investment in transit facilities and service improvements should be increased.
- **Transit Supportive Land Use Planning:** The land use plan should promote increased concentrations of jobs and housing so as to support a higher level of transit ridership and transit service.

Overview of the Transportation Plan

The Transportation Plan establishes a framework to create a balanced transportation system that allows for the movement of people and goods and creates an environment that is a good place to live, work, and recreate. The reciprocal relationship between transportation and land use should not be understated. The type and mix of land use can affect vehicle miles of travel and the viability of alternative transportation modes. While land use development is primarily in the realm of private developers, the zoning code and other city policies do impact land use decisions.

As such, the recommendations in this Transportation Plan must be coordinated with those in the Land Use plan element, and several other elements of the comprehensive plan. The following recommendations will focus on creating a transportation system with a neighborhood revitalization focus, as described in the Concept Plan. This plan will address the issues outlined above and describe strategies to:

- Improve the existing street system in order to maximize safety and minimize negative traffic impacts on neighborhoods and the environment;
- Utilize appropriate access management to provide for improved safety, traffic flow and road capacity;
- Improve streetscape appearance; and
- Increase bicycling, walking, and transit use.

The overall goal of the Transportation Plan is as follows:

Goal: Create a fiscally sound transportation system that offers choices for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods while enhancing neighborhood livability and residential quality of life.

A Smart Growth Approach to Transportation Planning

To lay the foundation for the recommendations in this plan, it is important to understand current transportation planning concepts and practices. Because transportation infrastructure and movement of vehicles creates localized impacts, the City needs an approach that balances the goal of freedom of movement and mobility with the protection of community livability and safety. Expansion of the roadway system in La Crosse and the surrounding Coulee Region is constrained by the bluffs and coulees, the La Crosse River Valley and marsh, and the Mississippi River and the Black River. Fiscal and political constraints also limit how and where the road system is improved and expanded. This Plan proposes a number of concepts for managing and improving the existing transportation system by recognizing that steps can be taken to:

- Reduce the demand for vehicle trips,
- Balance mobility and livability,

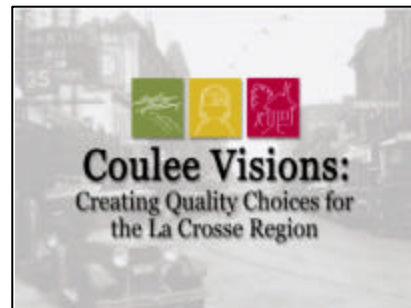
- Maximize the efficiency of the existing roadway capacity while reducing impacts on neighborhoods and increasing safety for all transportation system users.

More detailed information on trip demand, development patterns, traffic analysis and management is provided in Appendix A.

The Long-Range Transportation Plan for the La Crosse Area. The La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) is designated as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) to perform transportation planning activities for the La Crosse, Wisconsin/La Crescent, Minnesota urbanized area in accordance with federal regulations. The MPO planning boundaries include the cities of La Crosse, Le Crescent, Onalaska, the villages of Holman and West Salem, and the towns of Campbell, Medary, and parts of towns of Barre, Hamilton, Holland, La Crescent, and Onalaska.

The long-range transportation plan (LRTP) was adopted in February 18, 1998 and recently went through a reaffirmation process, which was approved in 2001. The LRTP provides a regional and multi-jurisdictional transportation planning perspective. The LRTP recommended a more compact urban growth land use pattern. The LRTP also recommended that cities be enabled to develop and redevelop with increased opportunities for urban infill around the major concentrations of commercial and industrial development in order to develop alternative modes of transportation such as bicycling and public transit.

Coulee Visions. A more recent transportation planning effort was completed for the LAPC called the *Coulee Visions Report*. The coulee visions planning effort espouses many smart growth principles and serves as a guiding document for other communities in the La Crosse urbanized area pursuing smart growth planning.

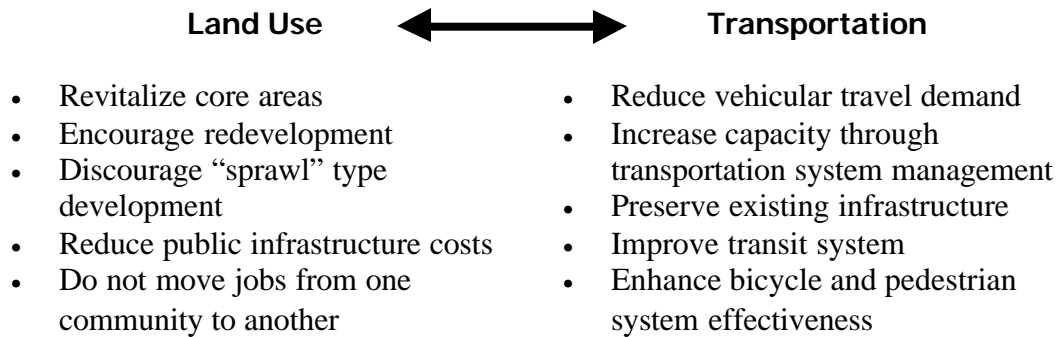


The document highlights the important linkage between land use and transportation in the La Crosse area. Land use is a major component of the Coulee Visions Report, which emphasizes redevelopment of underutilized land within the City. The Coulee Visions project goal and objectives, presented in Figure 5-1, are consistent with and complementary to the goals, objectives and actions identified in this plan. The Coulee Visions Report was meant to serve as a guide to the region’s cities, villages and towns on how to plan land use and transportation system using smart growth principles.

La Crosse County Development Plan 2020. The *La Crosse County Development Plan 2020* was reviewed for transportation compatibility. The plan’s emphasis on a multimodal approach to transportation and emphasis on the relationship land use transportation is compatible with this plan’s objectives and recommendations.

Figure 5-1 Coulee Vision’s Project Goal and Objectives

Project Goal: *To demonstrate alternative land use and transportation policies in the La Crosse Region to:*



Neighboring Community Plans. Of the adjacent communities to La Crosse, only the City of Onalaska has produced a recent comprehensive plan. The transportation issues addressed in the *City of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan* was reviewed for transportation system compatibility. There did not appear to be any transportation-related conflicts between *City of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan* and this plan.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation State Plans. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), has completed or is in the process of completing a series of statewide plans related to most modes of transportation. The plans identified below have been reviewed and evaluated for compatibility with this plan. WisDOT planning documents are discussed in greater detail under their respective mode subject areas.

- Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020
- Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020
- Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020
- Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020

WIS 16 Transportation Study. Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SHE) was contracted in September 2001 by WisDOT District 5 and the LAPC to conduct the *WIS 16 Transportation Study*. The study was completed in September 2002 and provides a more detailed assessment of the transportation issues related to the STH 16 corridor between County B (west) in La Crosse and Berlin Drive (east) in Onalaska. The study’s recommendations are consistent with the objectives and strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan and should be endorsed by the City of La Crosse Planning Commission and Common Council.

Summary of Transportation Objectives

The objectives of the Transportation plan element are summarized below:

System Development and Management

Objective 1: Balanced and Efficient Transportation System. Create a balanced and efficient transportation network that provides viable alternatives to driving and maximizes the use of existing investments.

Objective 2: Safe Transportation System. Improve transportation system safety.

Objective 3: Smart Growth and Land Use. Coordinate the provision and improvement of transportation infrastructure and services with land use development.

Objective 4: Traffic Management. Manage traffic to improve traffic flow and mobility through a balanced approach that respects other community values.

Objective 5: Parking Management. Provide parking that is efficient, cost-effective, and convenient while contributing to a pleasant, safe and comfortable pedestrian environment.

Roadway System

Objective 6: Thoroughfare System. Develop and maintain a thoroughfare system that ensures safe and efficient movement of people and goods, efficient and cost-effective use of public resources; and consistent, predictable and comfortable driving environments.

Objective 7: Major Roadway Design. Design the major roadway network to be safe and attractive to minimize negative impacts to adjacent uses and to foster multi-modal connectivity.

Objective 8: Neighborhood Streets. Design neighborhood streets that will serve local transportation needs, enhance safety and livability, and improve neighborhood quality.

Alternative Mode Choices

Objective 9: Pedestrian Environment. Improve pedestrian connections to create a continuous and seamless pedestrian system, and enhance pedestrian amenities to create a more attractive and convenient pedestrian environment.

Objective 10: Bicycle Network. Create a comprehensive bicycle network that provides for safe recreational and utilitarian bicycling.

Objective 11: Transit. Create an environment in which transit can compete as a viable transportation choice and thereby increase ridership and reduce auto trips and parking needs.

Commercial, Industrial and Regional Modes

Objective 12: Intercity bus. Ensure convenient access to intercity bus service.

Objective 13: Airport. Maintain and improve passenger and freight air service while minimizing impacts to surrounding neighborhoods.

Objective 14: Passenger Rail. Promote quality passenger rail service from the La Crosse Depot thereby supporting efforts to create the Midwest Regional Rail System.

Objective 15: Freight Rail. Maintain viable freight rail service while minimizing land use, safety and traffic impacts.

Objective 16: Trucking. Ensure safe and efficient truck access through the City and to major truck destinations while minimizing impacts to neighborhoods.

Objective 17: Waterways/Port. Promote safe and efficient river access while minimizing potential conflicts between commercial transportation and recreational waterway users.

Transportation Objectives and Actions

This section describes the major actions the City can take to achieve the transportation objectives, which are intended to create a transportation system that offers choices for the safe and efficient movement of goods and people and fosters neighborhood revitalization and livability. The objectives and actions are aimed at:

- improving the existing transportation system in order to minimize negative traffic impacts on neighborhoods and the environment;
- utilizing appropriate access management to enhance traffic flow, mobility and safety;
- improving streetscape appearance; and
- increasing bicycling, walking and transit use and decreasing vehicle miles of travel.

Transportation System Development and Management

Decisions regarding improvements and expansion of the transportation system in La Crosse should focus on improvements that foster neighborhood revitalization and maximize the efficient use of existing infrastructure. This will require careful coordination of land use decisions and transportation system investments. The overall goal is to develop a transportation system in La Crosse that is safe and efficient, provides a variety of transportation choices, and is well coordinated with land use development.

Objective 1: Balanced and Efficient Transportation System. Create a balanced and efficient transportation network that provides viable alternatives to driving and maximizes the use of existing infrastructure.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Multi-Modal Projects.** The City shall give priority to transportation improvement projects that foster walking, biking, carpooling, and transit use. Projects that eliminate gaps between modes and increase connectivity shall be given highest priority.

The City should evaluate and consider the percentage of mode use when setting budgets and prioritizing transportation improvements. The question may be asked what percentage of transportation funding should be allocated to the pedestrian system when 12 percent of commuters walk to work? A concern with this approach is that a transportation mode that has historically not seen significant investments in infrastructure and services likely results in lower usage. This is apparent in public transit service; less ridership has resulted in reduced investment and service, which in-turn leads to less ridership.

2. **Alternative Mode Choices.** The City shall work to develop infrastructure that supports modes other than the private automobile.

3. **Multi-modal Transportation Plan.** The City shall work to bridge gaps in the existing transportation system to improve transportation mode connectivity and maximize transportation system effectiveness. Particular attention will be paid to gaps in, and between, the transit, pedestrian, and bike-route networks. The City shall develop a multi-modal transportation plan that will:
 - Develop and maintain a GIS-based inventory of road, pedestrian, bicycle and transit route facilities.
 - Identify gaps in the system for each mode and problems with connectivity between modes.
 - Establish criteria for prioritizing system connectivity issues and determining costs from which to assess the cost/benefit tradeoff for improving connections.

4. **Transportation System Management.** The City shall utilize transportation system management strategies on arterial roadways to improve traffic flow, maximize capacity, and increase overall system efficiency and safety. Transportation system management strategies include:
 - Advanced Traffic Signal Control Systems (e.g., implement *City of La Crosse Interconnected Signal System Study Recommendations Report*)
 - Intelligent Transportation Systems (e.g., variable message signs)
 - Intersection improvements such as turning lane configurations and roundabouts

5. **Jurisdictional Cooperation and Coordination.** To achieve a seamless multimodal transportation system for the La Crosse area, the City shall work to coordinate planning and investments with WisDOT, La Crosse County, LAPC and adjacent communities La Crosse.

Objective 2: Safe Transportation System. Improve transportation system safety.

Transportation safety is vitally important. Safety issues should be continually monitored for the entire transportation system. Transportation improvements should reflect the safety needs of all users of the transportation system. The following discussion relates to specific crash analyses and recent safety related studies. Mode specific safety issues are discussed under their respective topic areas.

Figure 5-2 identifies intersections with five or more average crashes per year between 1997 and 1999. The intersection of STH 16 and STH 157, one of the busiest intersections in the region had the highest crash frequency. The intersections of Copeland Avenue and Clinton Street and Rose Street and Clinton Street combine for a crash frequency of 28 annual average crashes. The STH 16 and Gillette Street intersection had an average of 23 crashes per year.

The *La Crosse Interconnected Signal System Study Recommendations Report* was completed in April, 2002. Six intersections, selected by the City, were analyzed based on collision diagrams for the years 1998, 1999, 2000 and through September, 2001.

Table 5-1 illustrates the annual average accident frequency and accident rates based on accidents per million entering vehicles at the six intersections. ¹

Table 5-1: Selected High Accident Intersections

Intersection	Accident Frequency (Average Annual Number of Accidents)	Accident Rate (Accidents/Million Entering Vehicles)
1. West Avenue and State Street	16.1	1.63
2. Rose Street and Clinton Street	16.6	1.32
3. George Street and Gillette Street	8.7	1.17
4. Losey Boulevard and State Road	13.9	0.94
5. West Avenue and La Crosse Street	12.5	0.92
6. Losey Boulevard and La Crosse Street	8.7	0.64

Source: *La Crosse Interconnected Signal System Study Recommendations Report*,. Parsons Transportation Group, April 2002.

Policies/Actions:

1. High Crash Rate Intersection Recommendations. Implement the following recommendations for the high crash rate intersections identified in Table 5-1. as defined in the *La Crosse Interconnected Signal System Study Recommendations Report* (see Figure 5-2 for intersection locations).

1. West Avenue and State Street:
 - Consider signage to alert drivers of the signalized intersection ahead (immediate measure).
 - Install overhead traffic signals.
 - Increase size of all West Avenue signals at State Street to 12 inch LED indications and provide extra wide backplates.
2. Rose Street and Clinton Street:
 - Realign left turn lanes so that drivers can more easily see on-coming traffic.
 - Re-mark Clinton Street approaches to provide dedicated left turn lanes and adjust the detection.
 - Install additional set of loop detectors on Rose Street at about five seconds travel time from stop bar and increase the yellow interval to the value for the 85th percentile traffic speed.
 - Monitor pedestrian and bicycle accidents.
3. George Street and Gillette Street:
 - Change pavement markings to correct for the “negative offset” of the north-south left turn lanes to align left-turn lanes with one another.
4. Losey Boulevard and State Road:
 - Provide 2.5 second clearance intervals lengthening the east-west through phases and north-south left turn phases.

¹ *La Crosse Interconnected Signal System Study Recommendations Report*. Parsons Transportation Group. April 2002.

- Provide 2 second clearance intervals for the north-south through phases.
 - Provide 1.5 second clearance interval for the east-west left turn phases.
5. West Avenue and La Crosse Street:
 - Provide 2 second all-red clearance interval for all the movements and left turn movements.
 6. Losey Boulevard and La Crosse Street:
 - Control northbound left-turn movement with a protected only signal that always leads and includes a 2 second all-red clearance interval.
 - Consider removing unneeded protected interval for southbound left turns.
 - Consider installing an advanced vehicle detection for the southbound through movement at a distance that will provide dilemma zone protection for vehicles traveling at the 85th percentile speed.

2. Intersection Safety Analysis. The City shall work with WisDOT and LAPC to conduct detailed analysis of high crash frequency locations and implement appropriate safety measures (see Figure 5-2). High priority intersections include:

- STH 16 and STH 157.
- STH 16 and Gillette Street.
- CTH PH and STH 157.
- Cass Street and 3rd Street (This intersection will be redesigned as part of the new Cass Street Bridge construction).

3. Safety Public Education. The City shall work with WisDOT and LAPC to promote public education programs that support transportation safety.

Objective 3: Smart Growth and Land Use. Coordinate the provision and improvement of transportation infrastructure and services with land use development.

The interaction between land use and transportation is a critical principle in smart growth planning. This interaction is described in greater detail in Appendix A. The land use and development recommendations listed below and identified in greater detail in the Land Use plan element and Urban Design plan element are essential for achieving the goals and objectives of this plan.

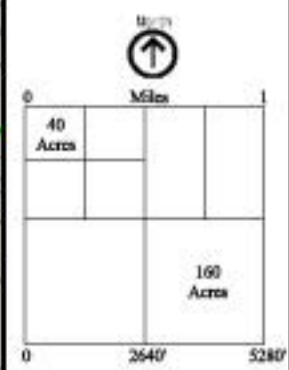
Policies/Actions:

1. Compact and Contiguous Growth. The City shall plan and construct new roadways only in areas contiguous with existing development. The City will maximize the efficiency of its roadway system by promoting compact and mixed-use development patterns that reduce trip distances and make pedestrian, transit, and bicycle trips viable transportation alternatives.

Figure 5-2
Crash Data and
Street Geometry



- Annual Average Crashes (1997-1999)
- Crash sites with 5 or more crashes for 3 consecutive years between 1997-1999
- High accident rate locations analyzed in the Interconnected Signal System Study, April 2002.
- Signalized intersection with loop detectors
- Signalized intersection without loop detectors
- One Way Street
- 3 Lane Traffic
- 4 Lane Traffic with center turning lane
- 4 Lane Traffic
- 2 Lane Traffic Local Streets
- 2 Lane Traffic Functionally Classified Streets
- Municipal Boundary
- City of La Crosse
- Water



City of
La Crosse
Comprehensive
Plan

2. **New Neighborhoods.** The City shall work with developers to create new neighborhoods organized on a grid pattern of interconnected local streets, where topography allows. New residential local streets should be designed for slower speeds (i.e., 20-25 miles per hour [mph]) and include sidewalks on both sides buffered from the street with a planting strip and street trees (refer to Figure 5-11 on page 5-38).
3. **Infill and Reinvestment.** The City shall promote infill and redevelopment in underutilized or deteriorated locations within existing City service areas to take advantage of existing roadway and transit facilities and encourage shorter travel distances between nearby residential, employment and commercial areas.
4. **Older Neighborhoods.** The City will invest in older neighborhoods near the downtown employment core and other employment sites to create opportunities to live in close proximity to places of employment thereby fostering walking, biking, and transit use.



Mixed-use development lends itself to walking, biking and transit use.

Objective 4: Traffic Management. Manage traffic to improve traffic flow and mobility through a balanced approach that respects other community values.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Update and Refine the Travel Demand Model.** The City shall work with WisDOT and LAPC to update the travel demand model with 2000 census data when available and consider refining the model to account for mixed land uses and multi-modal transportation improvements.

The La Crosse, Wisconsin/La Crescent, Minnesota urbanized area travel demand model was developed and calibrated in 1994. Although this model can still serve as a useful planning tool, the model's validity has lessened over time. A major model update and model calibration should be conducted using the necessary 2000 census

data. The travel demand model and traffic forecasts are described in greater detail in Appendix A.

A travel demand model update was conducted for this plan using the limited socioeconomic data available. Traffic forecasts for 2020 were developed based on the Land Use plan element recommendations. Model results are shown in Appendix A.

- 2. Capacity Improvements.** The City shall work with WisDOT, La Crosse County, LAPC and adjacent municipalities when appropriate, to cooperatively determine and prioritize major capacity improvements and establish how best to address related impacts. Roadways and intersections identified as a Level of Service (LOS) D should prompt the City to assess transportation improvement options. Improvements should be evaluated from the least intrusive to the most intrusive.

The following capacity improvement examples are identified from least intrusive to most intrusive approaches:

- Travel demand management strategies (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, transit/carpool use incentives).
- Signal timing coordination.
- Improved turn lanes.
- Reduce driveways and left-turn movements.
- Widen road.
- Build new road.

Capacity improvement options may be limited do to extenuating circumstances. The impact of some capacity improvements may conflict with other community goals and values. In these situations, the community may be willing to tolerate a lower LOS. The north-south corridor 5B-1 alternative proposal is an example of a capacity improvement that appeared to conflict with other community goals or values. Appendix B explains this plan’s approach to the north-south corridor issue.

Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020: WisDOT’s *Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020* was reviewed for consistency with the transportation element of *Confluence: the La Crosse Comprehensive Plan*. The State Highway Plan (SHP) 2020, published in February 2000, includes USH 53, STH 35, and STH 16 as connecting highways to their 2020 corridors “backbone” system. The SHP 2020 includes the North-South Corridor 5B-1 Alternative as a legislatively approved major Corridors 2020 connector project.

The SHP’s congestion policy describes that “to determine acceptable traffic movement performance thresholds for the SHP 2020, WisDOT had to balance the social, environmental, and financial costs incurred by using the more traditional performance thresholds with the costs of accepting more congestion on some portions of the system.” This statement seems to suggest that LOS is not the exclusive determining factor when considering major capacity improvements. This plan’s

approach to congestion related to North-South corridor and the *North-South Corridor Study* is described in Appendix B.

Our approach focuses on less intrusive congestion mitigation policies that try to balance transportation goals and objectives with other Comprehensive Planning goals and objectives, such as environmental protection and neighborhood livability. This approach is based on survey findings, the citywide referendum, input from the planning committee, and consistency with the Concept Plan and the Coulee Visions Plan. However, *Confluence* does not preclude consideration of major capacity improvements at a later date.

With the exception of the North South Corridor 5B-1 Alternative, the State Highway Plan does not appear to be inconsistent with the goals and policies included in this plan.

- 3. Access Management Plan.** The City shall work with WisDOT and LAPC to develop and implement an Access Management Plan for principal and minor arterial streets (notably U.S. 53, STH 16, and STH 35). Figure 5-3 identifies corridors that would benefit most from implementation of access management strategies in conjunction with streetscape improvements.

Access management is the control and regulation of the spacing and design of driveways, medians, median openings and traffic signals. These strategies can increase capacity, improve traffic flow, improve safety while maintaining an appropriate speed compatible with adjacent land uses. When combined with a streetscape plan, they can help create an attractive multi-modal environment. These strategies have been implemented on many La Crosse area roadways.

The following strategies should be considered along congested corridors and as part of an overall access management plan:

- Controlled left turns.
- Raised medians.
- Combined driveways.
- Driveways located away from intersections.
- Driveway accesses from cross streets where possible.

Sufficient traffic flow through the city via principal and minor arterials does not have to be at odds with creating livable and safe neighborhood streets. As described in the Analysis of Conditions and Identification of Issues Report, when a streetscape program with a pedestrian-friendly design is combined with access management strategies, the following benefits can be realized:

- More consistent traffic flow and speed.
- More predictable driving environment.
- Increased capacity and safety due to removing left turning vehicles from through-lane.

- Improved safety due to right turning vehicles consolidated to fewer driveways.
- Traffic calming effect of street trees in median and between road and sidewalks.
- Improved safety by pedestrians having to cross fewer driveways.
- Raised medians providing a pedestrian refuge at street crossings.
- More comfortable pedestrian environment with street trees providing a buffer between the drive lane and sidewalk and slower travel speeds.

Table 5-2 lists spacing guidelines for an access management classification system. In developed areas, meeting these guidelines may be difficult. Older areas of the City may provide particular challenges for achieving access point spacing guidelines.

Table 5-2: Access Management Classification System and Spacing Guidelines

Functional Class	Median Treatment	Existing and Proposed Land Use	Typical Posted Speed (mph)	Full Median Opening Spacing (Miles)	Minimum Signal Spacing (Miles)	Spacing Between Connections (Feet) (1)
Principal Arterial (Freeway)		Rural	70	NP	NP	NP
	Divided	Urban	60	NP	NP	NP
		Urban Core	55	NP	NP	NP
Principal Arterial (Other)		Rural	65	1	1	1,320
	Divided	Urban	> or = 45	1/2	1/2	1,320
		Urban Core	<45	1/4	1/4	450
		Rural	55	NA	1	860
	Undivided	Urban	> or = 45	NA	1/2	860
		Urban Core	<45	NA	1/4	450
Minor Arterial		Rural	55	1/2	1/2	820
	Divided	Urban	> or = 40	1/2	1/2	490
		Urban Core	<40	1/4	1/4	275
		Rural	55	NA	1/2	820
	Undivided	Urban	> or = 40	NA	1/2	490
		Urban Core	<40	NA	1/4	350
Collector	Divided	Urban	> or = 40	1/4	1/4	435
		Urban Core	<40	1/8	1/8	275
		Rural	55	NA	1/2	565
	Undivided	Urban	> or = 40	NA	1/4	410
Urban Core		<40	NA	1/8	310	

NP-Not Permitted.
NA-Not Applicable.

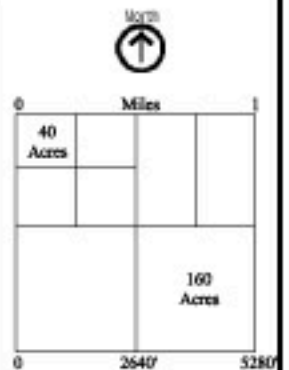
(1) Distances are based upon spacing between connections (major roads, local public streets, and private Driveways).

Source: *Toward an Access Classification System and Spacing Guidelines*; Minnesota Department of Transportation Access Management Initiative Technical Study #4, Minnesota Department of Transportation, 1999.



Figure 5-3
Access
Management
Improvement
Corridors

-  Access Management Improvement Corridors
-  Municipal Boundary
-  City of La Crosse
-  Water



City of
La Crosse
Comprehensive
Plan



“Before” and “after” images of Copeland Avenue illustrating streetscape enhancements such as street trees and discreet signage, that, when used with access management strategies, can improve safety, traffic flow, and the attractiveness of busy road corridors.



Coordinated Traffic Signal Control Systems: The City shall continue to work with WisDOT and LAPC to increase the use of coordinated traffic signals systems along arterial streets. Traffic signal improvements can improve capacity at intersections and more efficiently allocate green time for particular movements based on demand and/or time of day. The City should work with WisDOT to implement the traffic signal coordination recommendations as described in the *City of La Crosse Interconnected Signal System Study*.

4. Transportation Demand Management (TDM). In conjunction with WisDOT, LAPC, and TMA, the City shall work to develop and implement a transportation demand management plan. The plan would include strategies for increasing carpooling, transit use, walking, biking, off-peak travel, and telecommuting to efficiently utilize existing transportation infrastructure and services.

Strategies to be considered in the transportation management plan include but are not limited to:

- Employer-sponsored van/car pools.
- Preferential parking for van/car pools.
- Employer subsidized bus passes.
- Staggered work hours.
- Telecommuting.
- Bicycle facilities and incentives (e.g., enclosed bike lockers, showers at employment sites).
- Incentives for locating businesses near bus access.
- “Cash-out” parking policies (i.e., employees are given the option of receiving a parking space or the cash value equivalent).



Travel demand management strategies can help reduce single occupancy driving.
 (photo from Tom Huber, Wisconsin State Bicycle Coordinator)

Objective 5: Parking Management. Provide parking that is efficient, cost-effective, and convenient while contributing to a pleasant, safe and comfortable pedestrian environment.

Surface parking requires large amounts of land area which can greatly affect the look and function of an urban environment. On average, one off-street parking space occupies about 320 square feet, including drive aisles and driveways. The City of La Crosse zoning code defines minimum parking requirements for various land uses. These requirements are generally based on peak parking demand in suburban environments, which results in generous and often arbitrary standards. Furthermore, the code requires that parking be provided on the development site. This results in buildings surrounded by surface parking, which discourages pedestrian trips between nearby businesses.

Downtown parking is often a contentious issue. Parking tends to be a “double edged sword” in downtown areas. While parking should be available to businesses and visitors, it can be difficult to strike a balance between providing “adequate” parking without detracting from the characteristics that make downtown unique and attractive.

The cost-effectiveness of supplying more parking should be considered before building any major parking facilities. It may be more cost-effective to encourage “cash-out” parking policies where employees are given a choice between receiving a parking space or the equivalent monetary value.

It should not be assumed that new development automatically warrants more parking. An evaluation of existing parking can reveal how existing parking is being used based on time of day and day of week and lead to strategies that best utilize existing parking facilities.

Policies/Actions:

1. Parking Management Plan. The City shall develop and implement a Parking Management plan that includes:

- Parking supply inventory.
- Occupancy and turnover rate survey.
- An assessment of the cost of providing parking.
- A determination of what share of that cost should be assessed to users and/or business owners via downtown parking assessment district.
- Parking strategies that efficiently allocate the most convenient and desired parking to customers and visitors (e.g., pricing, time restrictions).
- Identification of surface lots as future development areas with parking spaces being replaced with pedestrian-oriented parking structures.
- Strategies for minimizing parking demand (e.g., encouraging “cash-out” parking programs, carpooling incentives, transit pass programs etc.)
- A determination of the viability of creating angled parking on some downtown streets.

A parking study was conducted for the City of La Crosse in 1997 by Rich and Associates, Inc. This study provided a wealth of information as well as a variety of recommendations to address downtown parking issues. However, there is a need to update the five year old study. Furthermore, an updated study should include a more detailed assessment of the interaction between parking supply and demand and assess the cost-effectiveness of offering alternatives to creating more parking.

2. Parking Requirements. To allow greater flexibility in parking requirements, the City shall:

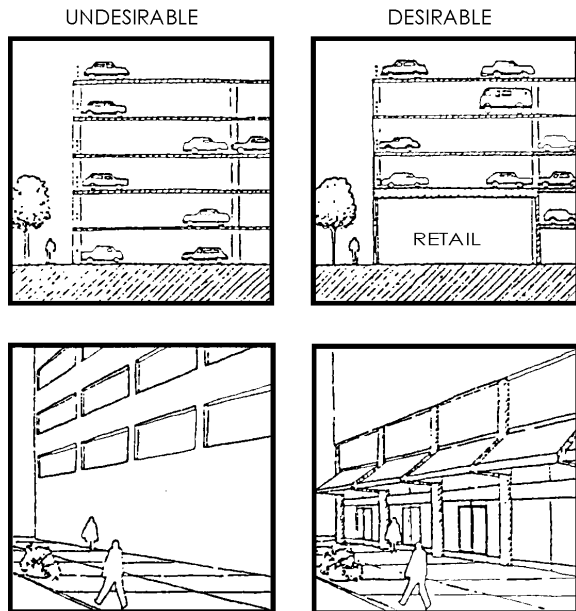
- Work with existing and future development to create “park-once” type environments that are accessible to pedestrian, bike and transit users. A “park-once” environment allows a customer to access a variety of activities (e.g., shopping, dry-cleaning, restaurants) within a convenient walking distance.
- Encourage shared parking agreements.
- Minimum parking requirements should be reevaluated and reflect typical use patterns; not peak demand situations.
- Continue to exempt downtown from minimum parking requirements and consider expanding the exemption to other pedestrian-oriented areas.
- Future downtown parking structures should be compatible with a pedestrian environment (e.g., include street level retail and interesting facades. See Figure 5-4).
- Study the impact of eliminating minimum parking requirements and developing a maximum parking limit.

3. Neighborhood Parking. The City shall work with neighborhoods and businesses to develop flexible and mutually beneficial strategies to address neighborhood on-street parking issues. This could be done through the neighborhood planning process and in conjunction with development review.

Issues related to on-street parking have been problematic in some residential areas. Residential areas near downtown or near other large commercial, employment, or educational facilities, often find that on-street parking during the day is taken up by customers, employees or students. This use is often viewed negatively by residents.

The parking management plan should identify strategies for addressing on-street

Figure 5-4 Parking Structures Designed to Enhance the Pedestrian Environment



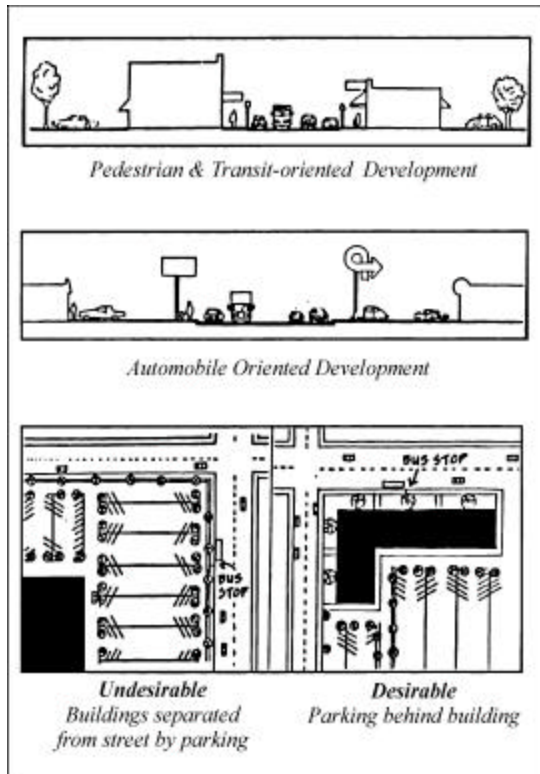
parking in residential areas. Strategies should offer flexibility to account for neighborhood-specific situations and may include:

- “Resident Only” Permit Zones.
- Metered on-street parking with residential exemptions. Revenues could be used to benefit the respective neighborhood.
- Time limits for on-street parking with residential exemptions.
- “Residential Only” permit zones with other users allowed to purchase parking permit. Revenues could be used to benefit the respective neighborhood.

4. Building Orientation. The City shall allow and/or encourage new buildings to be oriented closer to the street and sidewalks with parking on the side and in back striving to keep multiple activities together (see Figure 5-5).

By clustering buildings closer to the street and to each other, businesses become more accessible by walking, biking and transit, while still accommodating auto trips. Zoning and development regulations can accomplish this by removing or reducing front setbacks for commercial property. The City could also require or provide incentives for buildings to front directly on or close to the right-of-way.

Figure 5-5 Orient Buildings Toward the Street



Large auto-oriented single use development will likely continue without City action. For example, the City recently approved a proposal for a large “Big Box” retail development along the east side of Mormon Coulee Road, west of Markle Road, south of Shelby Road, and north of Marion Road. Based on the buildings proposed 187,000 square feet of retail space, the development is estimated to generate the following trips:

Example A: Trip Generation for 187,000 sq. foot Discount Superstore

	Weekday		Saturday		Sunday	
	Daily	PM Peak Hour	Daily	Peak Hour	Daily	Peak Hour
Trips Ends	8,800	750	10,300	920	8,100	800

Source: *Trip Generation*, February 1995 Update to the 5th Edition, Institute of Transportation Engineers.

Note: One trip (i.e., to and from the store) is equal to two trip ends.

The proposal calls for 900 parking spaces, well above the 800 parking spaces required by the City. Given the auto-oriented design, distant setback, and large surface parking lot, the development’s design creates a disincentive for walkers, bicyclists and transit users.



Typical “big box” developments with large parking lots can discourage pedestrians and transit users.

Roadway System Design

As in most American cities, the primary transportation mode in La Crosse is the automobile. This will likely remain the case well into the future. In 1990, 80 percent of all commuter trips were made using a private automobile. However, roadways serve more than just cars. Transit buses, bicyclists and pedestrians also use City streets. Furthermore, roadways serve as public space to adjacent residents and businesses. Roadway design not only affects how the transportation system is used, it also greatly impacts the overall appearance of the City.

Road design is directly related to the intended function of the road. The fundamental elements of roadway design include: road width, lane configuration, streetscaping (trees, sidewalks, etc.), and network pattern (e.g., grid). All of these elements affect the function and appearance of the transportation system. Who owns and maintains a roadway (roadway jurisdiction) may also determine its design.

Functional Classification System

The current functional classification system for the La Crosse/La Crescent urbanized area was adopted by the LAPC in 1993. Functional classification systems are intended to establish orderly and hierarchical roadway patterns based on travel purpose and function. Table 5-3 describes the general characteristics of the functional classification system hierarchy of streets.

WisDOT is planning to review and update the functional classification system in response to relevant 2000 Census data. Thus far, there have been very few requests to change the existing functional classification assignments in La Crosse. Furthermore, current traffic levels do not provide overwhelming evidence to support altering the existing functional classification. However, the percent of miles assigned as principal arterial routes does exceed the recommended guidelines set by WisDOT. The remaining categories are well within their respective mileage guidelines (see Table 5-3).

Table 5-3: La Crosse Urbanized Area Functional Classification Mileage

Functional Classification	Miles	Percent	WisDOT Guidelines
Principal Arterials – Interstate	6.5	1.5%	
Principal Arterials - Others	47.9	10.9%	
Principal Arterials - Total	54.4	12.4%	5-10%
Minor Arterials	43.5	9.9%	10-15%
Collectors	37.2	8.5%	5-10%
Locals	302.7	69.1%	65-80%
Total	437.8		

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Note: may not sum to total due to rounding.

Table 5-4: General Characteristics of Functional Classification System

	Definition/Purpose	Traffic Flow/Access Priority	Facility Spacing	Trip Length	Traffic Volume	Traffic Speed	Pedestrian Provisions	Bicycle Provisions	Fixed Route Transit Provisions	
Freeway	Full access control with continuous traffic flow separated in grade from other facilities. Intended for high-volume, high-speed traffic movement between sites and across the metropolitan area. No direct access is provided to adjacent land.	Traffic Flow/Access Priority: 99/1 Access by grade-separated interchanges at 1-3 mile intervals.	4-6 Miles	Between sites and across metropolitan area (2 or more miles).	20,000-100,000 vehicles per day.	Running: 55-70 mph Average: 65-80 mph.	Pedestrians Prohibited.	Bicycles Prohibited.	No stops, express routes only.	Freeway
Expressway	Partial access control and high priority for traffic flow with at-grade signalized intersections for major streets. Intended for high-volume, moderate-to-high speed traffic movement across the metropolitan area with minimal access to adjacent land. May be designed as a highway with separation from adjacent land uses or as a street with controlled access to adjacent land uses.	Traffic Flow/Access Priority: 80/20 At-grade intersections with arterial and collector streets. Signals are in firmly spaced to optimum traffic flow. Driveway and street intersections designed for maximum of 10 mph speed decrease in through-lane for turning vehicle.	3-6 Miles	Across metropolitan area and between major activity centers (2 or more miles).	20,000-50,000 vehicles per day.	Running: 40-55 mph Average: 30-40 mph.	Highways: Pedestrians discouraged. Streets: Walkways required on both sides.	Highways: None Streets: Separate path striped lane.	Highways: No stops, express routes only. Streets: Turnouts at major generators.	Expressway
Primary Arterial	Provides for high to moderate-volume, moderate-speed traffic movement between and through major activity centers. Access to abutting property is subordinate to traffic flow and is subject to necessary control of entrances and exits.	Traffic Flow/Access Priority: 60/40 270' spacing for accesses and additional control as required for traffic flow. Safety and traffic flow are balanced in determining signal spacing.	1-2 Miles	Between and through major activity centers (2-6 miles).	10,000-30,000 vehicles per day.	Running: 30-40 mph Average: 25-30 mph.	Walkways required on both sides.	Paved shoulders & Shared outside lanes. Striped lanes 5.	Scheduled stops every 1/4 mile.	Primary Arterial
Minor Arterial	Augments and feeds the primary arterial system and is intended for moderate-volume, moderate-speed traffic movement. Access to abutting property is partially controlled.	Traffic Flow/Access Priority: 45/55 210' spacing for accesses. Safety is higher priority than traffic flow in determining signal spacing.	1/2-1 Mile	Between and within activity centers (1-4 miles).	5,000-20,000 vehicles per day.	Running: 25-35 mph Average: 20-25 mph.	Walkways required on both sides.	Shared outside lanes. Striped lanes.	Scheduled stops every 1/4 mile.	Secondary Arterial
Collector	Collects and distributes traffic between arterial streets and local streets. Intended for short length trips while also providing access to abutting properties. Design of collector streets varies depending on the character and intensity of traffic generated by adjacent land development.	Traffic Flow/Access Priority: 30/70 180' spacing for non-residential accesses.	1/4-1/2 Mile	Local street to arterial street (1/2-2 miles).	1,500-5,000 vehicles per day.	Running: 20-30 mph Average: 15-20 mph.	Walkways required on both sides.	Shared outside lanes. Striped lanes.	Scheduled service and paratransit.	Collector
Local	Provides direct access to abutting property. Intended for low-speed, low-volume traffic movement and for short length trips. Design of local streets varies depending on the character and intensity of traffic generated by adjacent land development.	Traffic Flow/Access Priority: 10/90 No restrictions. 40' between accesses.	As required	Access to individual property parcels (Less than 1/2 mile).	Commercial less than 1,000 residential vehicles per day.	Running: 20-25 mph Average: 10-15 mph.	Walkways required on both sides.	Shared outside lanes.	Scheduled service if no viable collector access.	Local

Roadway Jurisdiction

In general, roadways that solely serve local transportation needs are owned and maintained by the local government. Roadways that serve regional or statewide transportation needs are owned and maintained by the state or county. Jurisdictional assignment is based on several factors including:

- Length of road.
- Length of trips served.
- Connections to roads of similar jurisdictions.
- Average daily traffic.
- Functional classification.
- Special facilities served.

On rare occasions, WisDOT may desire that a state road be transferred to a local jurisdiction. Before such a roadway transfer occurs, negotiated improvements should be made to prevent major improvement costs being imposed on the local jurisdiction. WisDOT has established guidelines for jurisdictional transfers.

Objective 6: Thoroughfare System. Develop and maintain a thoroughfare system that ensures safe and efficient movement of people and goods, efficient and cost-effective use of public resources, and consistent, predictable and comfortable driving environments.

The thoroughfare system provides access to, through and between cities and regions. These major roads include interstate highways, principal arterials, minor arterials, and to a lesser extent, major collectors.

Policies/Actions:

1. Update Functional Classification System. The City shall work with WisDOT and LAPC to update the functional classification system to ensure that an efficient balance between mobility and land access is maintained. The following functional classification changes may warrant consideration (see Figure 5-6):

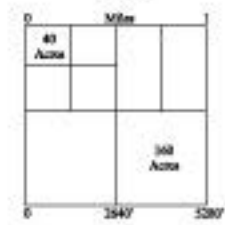
- **George Street/Lang Drive/West Avenue (STH 35)** is currently classified as a minor arterial. It has significantly higher annual average daily traffic (AADT) than all east-west principal arterials. This may suggest that this corridor is serving more of a principal arterial function. Therefore, an argument could be made for making STH 35 a principal arterial and changing Gillette Street to a minor arterial since this street is a relatively short route with existing and projected traffic counts lower than George Street/Lang Drive/West Avenue. This switch in classification would maintain WisDOT's guidelines for functional classification mileage .

- **16th Street** does not connect to La Crosse Street, and should be changed to a local street north of State Street or an alternative connection to La Crosse Street identified to serve the collector function.
 - **Campbell Road** does not connect directly to the La Crosse Street and Losey Boulevard intersection as indicated in the functional classification map. An alternative route connection should be designated as the minor arterial.
 - **Smith Valley Road** may need to be upgraded to a collector street as development occurs. Figure 4-3 in the Land Use plan element identifies the areas along Smith Valley Road south of County Road B as an urban expansion area.
- 2. Roadway Jurisdictional Transfers.** Roadway jurisdiction should be compatible with role and type of transportation the route is intended to serve. Future jurisdictional transfers should be negotiated within the framework of the existing jurisdictional transfer guidelines prepared by WisDOT. The completion of a new minor arterial from 12th Avenue S. to STH 16 will serve a regional purpose (see Figure 5-6). Therefore, it may be appropriate for this road to fall under WisDOT jurisdiction.
- 3. New Arterial and Collector Streets.** The City will plan for the appropriate provision of functionally classified roadways to serve future development as identified in the Land Use plan element. Potential roadway improvements are shown on Figure 5-7 and include:
- 12th Avenue S. extension between Enterprise Avenue and STH 16 north of the railroad bridge.
 - Figure 4-3 in the Land Use plan element illustrates the urban expansion areas planned for La Crosse. Travel demand forecasts do not indicate a need for higher capacity roads in these areas based on dwelling unit forecasts. However, there may be a need to upgrade Smith Valley Road from a local road to a collector street as development occurs.

Figure 5-6
Functional Class and National Highway System (NHS)



- Interstate
- Principal Arterials
- Minor Arterials
- Collectors
- Proposed Collectors
- Proposed Minor Arterials
- Remove Functional Classification
- Local Streets
- NHS Route
- Railroad
- Municipal Boundary
- City of La Crosse
- Water
- Airport Terminal
- Major Freight Terminal
- Rail Passenger Terminal
- Bus Terminal
- Park-and-Ride Lots



City of La Crosse
Comprehensive Plan

Objective 7: Major Roadway Design. Design the major roadway system to be safe and attractive to minimize negative impacts to adjacent uses and to foster multi-modal connectivity.

The major roadways that make up the thoroughfare system serve both local and through trips. However, these roads can negatively impact neighborhoods and adjacent land uses. Therefore, these roads need to provide safe and attractive environments to minimize the negative impacts associated with high traffic roads. Street design guidelines are described in further detail in Appendix A of the Urban Design plan element.

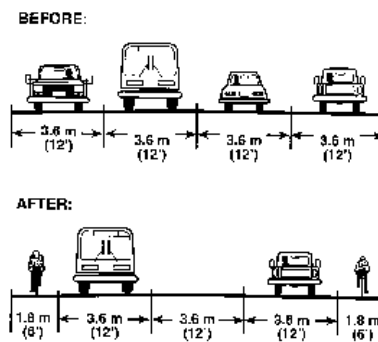
Policies/Actions:

- 1. Three-Lane Road Configuration.** The City should work with WisDOT and LAPC to evaluate the use of three-lane road configuration for streets currently designed as four-lane undivided roadways and for two-lane arterial streets with approximately 10,000 to 15,000 AADT.

A three-lane configuration consists of one through lane in each direction and a center two-way left-turn-lane (TWLTL) or dedicated left turn lanes. Converting four-lane undivided roadways to three-lane configurations have been shown to improve traffic flow, reduce speeding, decrease speed variability, increase safety, and provide a safer and more comfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists than four-lane undivided roadways with a minimal decrease in capacity.²

Converting an existing four-lane undivided roadway to a three lane configuration can be accomplished by simply re-striping drive lanes. However, if the three-lane concept proves to be desirable in the long-term, streetscape improvements such as planted medians, street trees, and pedestrian crossing treatments at intersections should be considered to improve safety and appearance. Figure 5-7 identifies roadways that could be considered for a three-lane configuration.

Example of four-lane undivided road converted to three-lanes.



² *Guidelines for the Conversion of Urban Four-Lane Undivided Roadways to Three-Lane Two-Way Left Turn Lane Facilities*; Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE) Iowa State University; April 2001.

Converting a four-lane undivided roadway to a three-lane roadway is appropriate in areas with frequent left turning movements and/or where speeding and safety concerns are problems. The feasibility of replacing an urban four-lane undivided road with a three-lane configuration should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Appendix C includes a list of factors to be considered for determining the feasibility of three-lane configurations. Characteristics and sample evaluative questions are provided under each of the following factors:

- Roadway function and environment.
- Overall traffic volume and level of service.
- Turn volumes and patterns.
- Frequent-stop and/or slow-moving vehicles.
- Weaving, speed and queues.
- Crash type and patterns.
- Pedestrian and bike activity.
- Right-of-way availability, cost and acquisition impacts.
- General characteristics:
 - Parallel roadways.
 - Offset minor street intersections.
 - Parallel parking.
 - Corner radii.
 - At-grade rail crossings.



Example of a three lane configuration with one lane in each direction, dedicated left turn lanes, planted medians and parking on both sides

Three-lane Feasibility: The feasibility of a four-lane undivided to a three-lane configuration from an operational point of view (with respect to volume only) are as follows based on bi-directional peak-hour traffic:

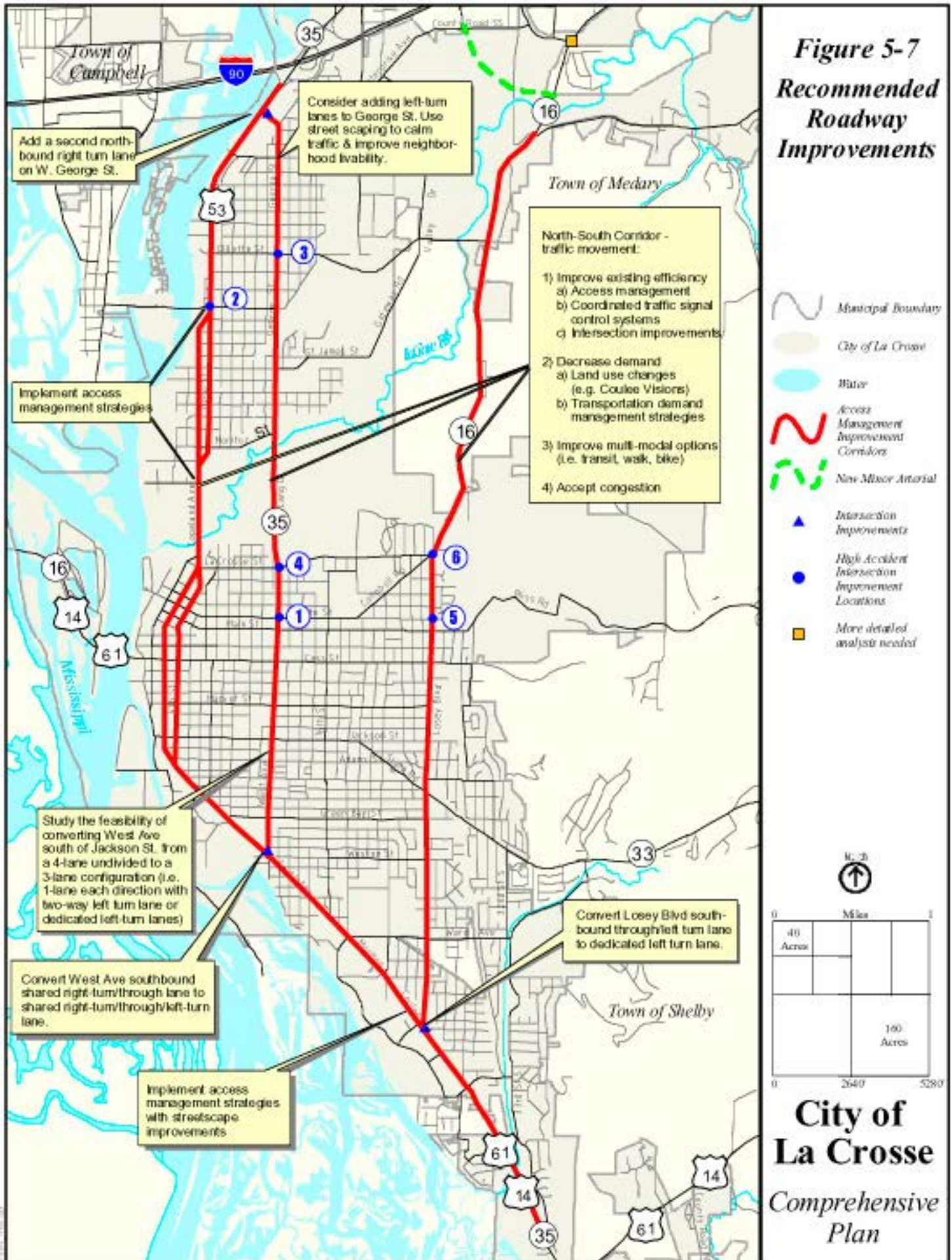
- < or = 1,500 vehicles per hour (vph): feasibility probable
- 1,500 to 1,750 vph: exercise caution
- > or = 1,750 vph: feasibility less likely

These volumes are general guidelines. Three-lane conversions have been used on roads with an AADT of up to 24,000. Further study is required for any corridor being considered for a three-lane conversion. Detailed guidelines are included in Appendix C.

2. Intersection Improvements. The City shall continue to work with WisDOT and LAPC to improve intersection capacity and safety.

Improvements to intersections, through geometric design or traffic control devices can increase traffic flow, reduce congestion, and improve safety. Figure 5-7 identifies several intersections in need of capacity and/or safety improvements including:

**Figure 5-7
Recommended
Roadway
Improvements**



Add a second northbound right turn lane on W. George St.

Consider adding left-turn lanes to George St. Use street scaping to calm traffic & improve neighborhood livability.

Implement access management strategies

North-South Corridor - traffic movement:

- 1) Improve existing efficiency
 - a) Access management
 - b) Coordinated traffic signal control systems
 - c) Intersection improvements
- 2) Decrease demand
 - a) Land use changes (e.g. Coulee Visions)
 - b) Transportation demand management strategies
- 3) Improve multi-modal options (i.e. transit, walk, bike)
- 4) Accept congestion

Study the feasibility of converting West Ave south of Jackson St. from a 4-lane undivided to a 3-lane configuration (i.e. 1-lane each direction with two-way left turn lane or dedicated left-turn lanes)

Convert West Ave southbound shared right-turn/through lane to shared right-turn/through/left-turn lane.

Implement access management strategies with streetscape improvements

Convert Losey Blvd southbound through/left turn lane to dedicated left turn lane.

- Morman Coulee Road and Losey Boulevard: Convert existing southbound shared through/left lane to a designated left-turn only lane. This design would allow dual left turn lanes for southbound movements from Losey Boulevard to Morman Coulee Road to improve traffic flow.
- South Avenue and West Avenue: Convert existing southbound through/right lane to allow for left-turns as well. This would create a dual left-turning movement southbound from West Avenue to Mormon Coulee Road, improving traffic flow.
- Rose Street and George Street: Add a second northbound right-turn lane on George Street to improve LOS at intersection.

Roundabouts at intersections with equal traffic counts from each leg have been shown to increase capacity and improve safety better than traffic signals at a comparable cost.

- 3. Arterial and Collector Street Design.** The City shall work with WisDOT, LAPC, and La Crosse County in the design and development of arterial and collector street projects. New arterial and collector streets should accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, and transit whenever possible. Figure 5-9 illustrates proposed arterial and collector street design cross-sections. Although these designs conform to AASHTO minimum street design guidelines (see Table 5-5), WisDOT and County standards may differ.

Table 5-5 AASHTO Minimum Street Design Guideline Summary

	Local	Collector	Arterial
Design Speed	20-30 mph	30 mph	37 - 62 mph
Through-Lanes	1 to 2	2	2 or >
Lane Width	10-12 ft	10-12 ft	10-12 ft
Parking Lane			
Width	7 ft	7-10 ft	10-12 ft
Curb Width	1-2 ft	1-2 ft	1-2 ft

Source: American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

- 4. Parkway Design.** The City shall work with WisDOT and LAPC to identify streets that can be designed as parkways in conjunction with road reconstruction

A parkway effect can be created by converting raised concrete covered medians to planted medians, preferably with large trees that will narrow site distance to encourage slower, yet consistent driving speeds. Trees should also be planted in the boulevard along the road edges. Trees and other plantings along parkways provide a buffer between moving traffic and pedestrians and create an attractive streetscape.

Parkways are discussed in greater detail in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space and Urban Design plan elements. Roads identified for parkway designation are shown in Figure 7-3 of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan element.

- 5. Streetscape Enhancements and Design.** The City shall work with WisDOT and La Crosse County to install streetscape enhancements such as planting strips, street

trees, planted medians, neighborhood compatible lighting and appropriate pedestrian, transit, and bicycle facilities in conjunction with reconstruction of major roadways. Streetscape enhancements should be coordinated with access management improvements. Streetscape design elements are described in greater detail in the Urban Design plan element.

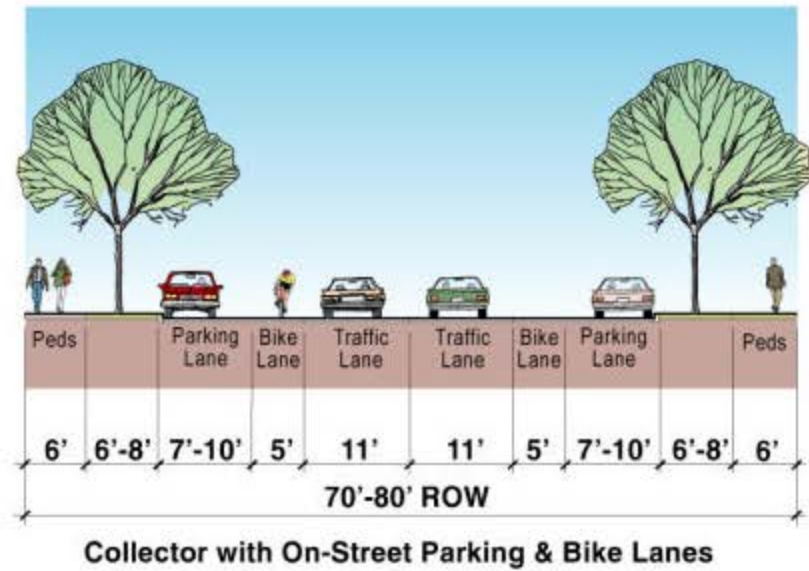
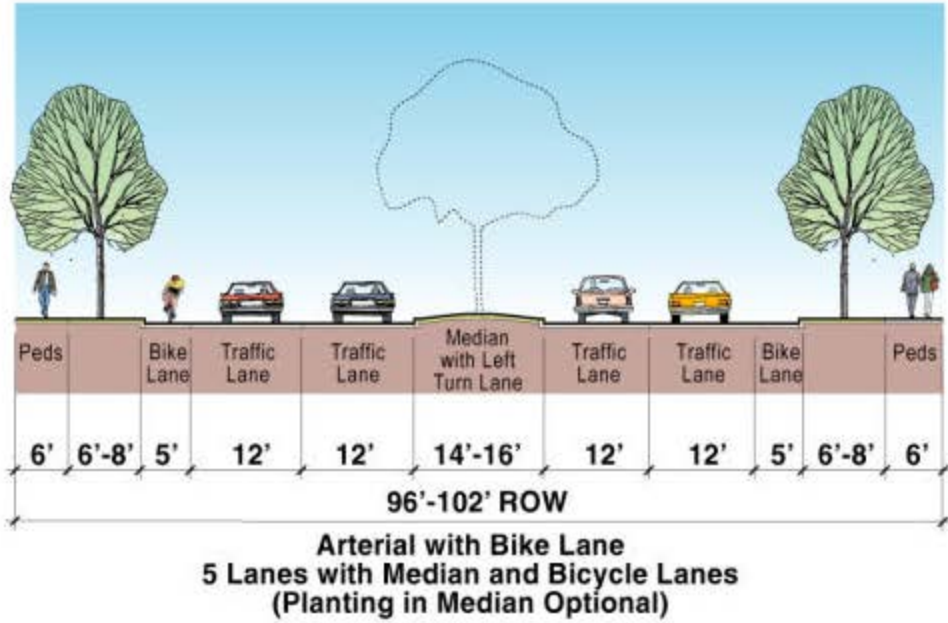
Maintaining sufficient traffic flow on principle and minor arterials does not have to be at odds with creating livable and safe roadways. As described in the *Analysis of Conditions and Identification of Issues*, traffic capacity is actually maximized at speeds between 25 mph and 30 mph. When a streetscape program with a pedestrian-friendly design is combined with access management strategies similar to that shown in Figure 5-8, the following benefits can be realized:

1. More consistent traffic flow and speed.
2. A more predictable driving environment.
3. Increased capacity due to removing left-turns from through-lane.
4. Improved safety due to:
 - Left-turning movements removed from through-lane.
 - Right-turning movements using fewer driveways.
 - Slower speeds due to traffic calming effect of street trees in median and between road and sidewalks.
5. Improved pedestrian safety due to:
 - Pedestrians crossing fewer driveways.
 - Raised medians providing a pedestrian refuge at street crossings.
6. More comfortable pedestrian environment due to:
 - Street trees providing a buffer between traffic and pedestrians.
 - Slower travel speeds.

Figure 5-8 Combine Streetscape Enhancements with Access Management Strategies



Figure 5-9 Arterial and Collector Street Cross Sections



Objective 8: Neighborhood Streets. Design neighborhood streets that will serve local transportation needs, enhance safety and livability, and improve neighborhood quality.

The design of residential streets is an important component to creating safe, attractive, and functional neighborhoods. Neighborhood street right-of-way not only serves a transportation function but it also serves as public space where neighbors interact, people walk and bike, and children play. Therefore, the design of neighborhood streets must promote neighborhood livability and safety while providing adequate through movement.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Grid Pattern.** The City shall maintain the existing grid street pattern in established neighborhoods. The City shall encourage, where feasible, the use of a grid or modified grid pattern in new residential developments. Cul-de-sacs should only be used where it is determined to be the only feasible means to provide access to property due to rugged topography or to preserve significant natural resources.

Grid pattern streets provide an interconnected street network that provides direct and multiple route options for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers. Local roads within this grid pattern are meant to serve local neighborhood traffic. In order to discourage non-local trips, local streets should be narrow, which has been shown to greatly reduce travel speeds. The target speed for local residential streets should be 20 to 25 mph.

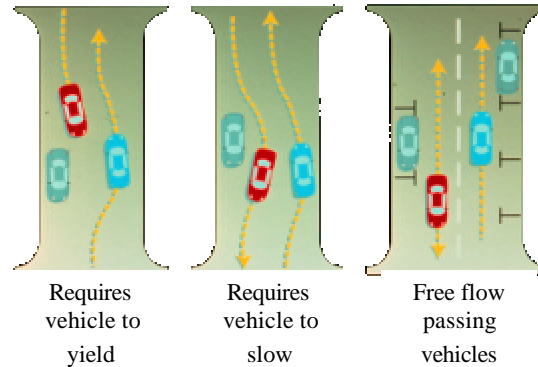
- 2. GIS Mapping.** The City shall complete a GIS mapping project that identifies every city street that has been vacated to illustrate the number of lane miles no longer available for dispersing traffic. Vacated streets forces traffic to divert to neighboring roads intensifying the traffic impact on those streets. Many east-west streets downtown have been vacated such as segments of Main Street, Pine Street, Badger Street, and Vine Street.
- 3. New Residential Street Design.** The City shall consider 24-foot wide local streets with one side parking in new neighborhoods as illustrated in Figure 5-11 and 30-foot wide local streets with two side parking in higher density new neighborhoods. New streets shall include sidewalks and street trees on both sides.

A 24-foot road width with one-side parking should be more than adequate to accommodate a typical single-family neighborhood. This configuration would provide for a seven-foot parking lane and a 17-foot shared through lane. This configuration will require an on-coming vehicle to pull into the parking lane to allow the other vehicle to pass or both to pass at a slow speed (see Figure 5-10).

Concept of “Lanes” and Shared Street Space: Where streets are not striped for separate lanes of travel, designers must not automatically think of separate “lanes” of traffic or parking in an additive sense (with respect to lane dimensions). For example, on narrow streets, with intermittent on-street parking, the street’s width may occasionally require one driver to slow down or pull over to let an oncoming vehicle pass before proceeding.

There are many such streets throughout the country and are typically well liked by residents. From a designer’s perspective, where volumes are low and large vehicles are few, one may only need a single through-lane. Street width, which defines the primarily vehicular space and which must be crossed by pedestrians, must not be larger than is actually needed.³

Figure 5-10 Yield, Slow and Free Flow Lanes



WisDOT’s *Facilities Development Manual* currently calls for local streets to be built with a minimum of two ten-foot lanes and a total width between 24 to 30 feet without parking and 32 to 36 feet with parking. This standard seems excessive for low volume residential streets where slower speeds are desirable and pedestrian safety a priority.

The recommended design also includes a six-foot planting strip with street trees and sidewalks on both sides of the street. Street trees narrow the site line, which makes driving at higher speeds uncomfortable.

The reconstruction of existing local streets will need more design flexibility based on existing traffic counts, parking demand, and neighborhood specific issues.

Use of narrower streets has become more common in new residential developments over the last decade. There are many examples throughout the country and within the La Crosse area where narrower streets have been used. Slowing traffic speeds is one of the primary benefits of narrowing street width. Other benefits resulting from slower traffic speeds include:

- Reduction in traffic noise.
- More comfortable and useable front yards.
- Improved pedestrian environment.
- Increased pedestrian safety.
- Less cut through traffic.

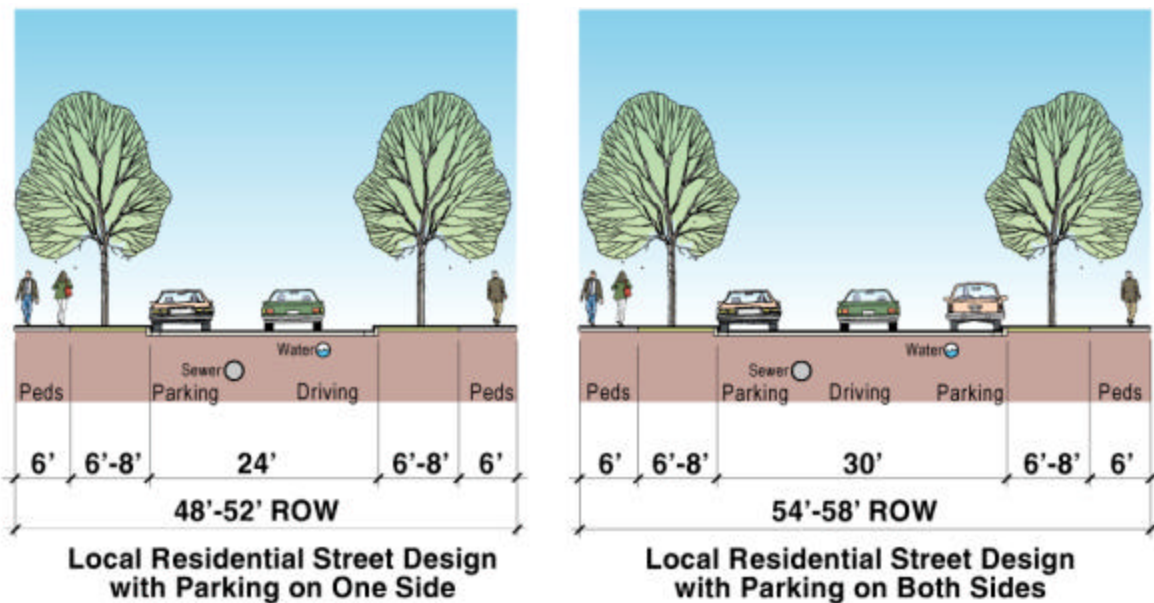
³ *Traditional Neighborhood Development Street Design Guidelines*, Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE); June 1997.

Additional benefits of narrow streets include:

- Reduced construction costs to developers (24-foot wide street = \$126 per linear foot, 36-foot wide street = \$153 per linear foot).
- Reduced maintenance and reconstruction costs for the City.
- Reduced snow removal costs (less surface to plow on narrow streets, City of Blaine, Minnesota found that one snow plow operator can plow 30 miles of grid pattern streets but only 16 miles of cul-de-sacs).
- Less impervious surface creating water run off problems.
- Shorter (safer) pedestrian crossings.

It is important to note that creating narrower streets is a proven strategy for creating safer, more livable streets, that promote walking and biking. However, when determining appropriate street width, due consideration must be given to ensure adequate emergency vehicle access. Additional information on street design is provided in Appendix A and in the Urban Design plan element.

Figure 5-11 Local Street Design Cross Sections



- 4. Neighborhood Street Reconstruction Design.** The City should work with neighborhoods in assessing traffic counts, parking needs and other street and traffic related issues when determining appropriate road width for local street reconstruction. While narrower streets (i.e., 24 foot or 30 foot) should be considered the base standards in local street reconstruction, areas with higher traffic and/or greater parking demand may require a wider street configuration.



Residential street with sidewalks and street trees

- 5. Traffic Calming.** The City should support the use of appropriate traffic calming strategies on local streets and other streets where deemed appropriate. The City should invite public/neighborhood input when considering the use of traffic calming strategies in neighborhoods. Temporary/pilot projects have successfully demonstrated the impacts/benefits of traffic calming strategies. See Appendix A for additional information on traffic calming techniques.



Intersection neck-downs – A traffic calming strategy (i.e.) which reduces pedestrian crossing distance and slows traffic by narrowing site lines, this design is particularly appropriate in high pedestrian areas such as near schools or parks

Alternative Mode Choices

The Concept Plan emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities to walk, bike and use transit; both to enhance neighborhood livability and to promote alternative transportation modes. La Crosse currently has a high percentage of residents that walk to work. It also has a good foundation of bicycle paths and routes and public transit service. The following objectives highlight additional considerations that should be given to build on existing networks and make these modes more viable and attractive transportation options.

Objective 9: Pedestrian Environment. Improve pedestrian connections to create a continuous and seamless pedestrian system, and enhance pedestrian amenities to create a more attractive and convenient pedestrian environment.

Walkable communities are places where walking is considered safe, comfortable, attractive, with pedestrian accessible destinations. Virtually all trips begin and end with a walking trip, yet over the last 50 years, walking as a form of transportation has generally been ignored. According to the 1990 census, 12 percent of La Crosse commuters walked to their destination.

Pedestrian issues should not be underestimated or undervalued. Similar to the roadway network, pedestrian facilities need to be viewed as a system providing for seamless and comfortable pedestrian movements throughout the community. Requirements for the provision of public sidewalks are of limited value if the sidewalks end abruptly at the first major roadway or if they are waved by the planning commission and common council during the review process.

Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020. The following objective and policies are consistent with and complimentary to the vision, goals and objective identified in WisDOT's *Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020*. The City should continue to work closely with WisDOT to ensure that pedestrian issues, particularly those affecting children, the elderly, and the disabled, are addressed along and across state trunk highways within La Crosse.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Multi-Modal Transportation Plan.** The City shall develop a plan that identifies and prioritizes sidewalk and pedestrian needs (e.g., pedestrian ramps, crosswalks, etc.). The plan should include an implementation process and program for funding pedestrian improvements. Improvements should be prioritized according to pedestrian benefits, safety, access to schools, parks and other major pedestrian generators.
2. **Sidewalks.** The City shall require sidewalks in all new development except in rural and very low density areas. Developed areas without sidewalks should be retrofitted with sidewalks focusing on high priority/high use areas (e.g., schools, parks, commercial districts, etc.). Sidewalk connections and crosswalks at major intersections should be completed in coordination with new development. Sidewalks in residential

developments should be located on both sides the street. Sidewalks should be separated/buffered from busy roads by a boulevard planted with street trees where feasible.

3. **Pedestrian Crossings.** The City shall work to provide adequate pedestrian crossings throughout the City. At a minimum, pedestrian crossing shall comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act by providing appropriately designed pedestrian ramps. Pedestrian crossing design should be a priority in the design and construction or reconstruction of functionally classified roadways. In particular, priority should be given to principal arterial streets with fast moving traffic and multiple through lanes and on major roadways near schools, parks and other high pedestrian activity areas.
4. **Pedestrian Environment.** The City shall work to create pedestrian-oriented environments by implementing the Land Use plan element and Urban Design plan element recommendations. Merely providing sidewalks does not create viable pedestrian environments. Land use densities, site design, and pedestrian scale streetscapes are also important factors that must be considered. Pedestrian accommodations (e.g., sidewalks and pedestrian routes through parking lots) should be required within all new commercial developments.

Objective 10: Bicycle Network. Create a comprehensive bicycle network that provides for safe recreational and utilitarian bicycling.

The City of La Crosse has a relatively high percentage of bicycle commuters – in part due to its student population – and should encourage even more bicycle travel through the provision of a safe, well maintained, and connected network of bicycle routes and trails.

La Crosse currently enjoys a good network of on-street bike routes and off-street trails. Bicyclists have access to the Great River State Trail, the La Crosse River State Trail, the Elroy-Sparta State Trail, the 400 State Trail, and the Omaha State Trail, which combined, total 116 miles of trails. Creating on-road bicycle route connections to the existing off-road trail system will allow City trails to serve both recreational and transportation purposes.

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020. WisDOT has recognized the importance of bicycling as a legitimate transportation mode and clarifies their role for encouraging bicycling in the *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020*. The plan presents a blueprint for improving bicycling conditions and encouraging bicycling in the state.

The Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan calls the implementation of metropolitan area bicycle plans that have been prepared by Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The following policies are consistent with the *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020* and the bicycle element of the *Long-range Transportation Plan for the La Crosse Area*. The City should continue to work with WisDOT and LAPC through the implementation of these plans to increase bicycling and bicycling safety in La Crosse.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Multi-Use Trails.** The City shall continue to develop connections to the City’s existing and proposed multi-use trails to provide an integrated network of trails. On-road facilities should be developed to provide connections to the trails and throughout the community (see Figure 5-12). Trails shall be designed in accordance with industry guidelines and standards to provide safe environments for trail users.
2. **Rail to Trails.** The City shall continue to work with La Crosse County and WDNR to explore opportunities to utilize and acquire abandoned rail lines to create multi-use (pedestrian/bicycle) trail corridors.
3. **On Road Bicycle Facilities.** The City shall continue to work with WisDOT, La Crosse County, and the LAPC to create on-road bike facilities (e.g., bike lanes, wide shared use lanes, paved shoulders) in conjunction with major roadway reconstruction. Bicycle facilities shall be designed in accordance with industry guidelines and standards to maximize safety. If bike facilities cannot be provided because of right-of-way or safety constraints, alternative routes and facilities should be identified and created to maintain network connectivity. Bike racks, enclosed lockers, showers and changing facilities should be considered at schools and major employment and commercial destinations.
4. **Bike Route Signage.** The City shall work with appropriate jurisdictions to sign the designated bike route network. Strong consideration should also be given to providing directional signs to key destinations along designated bike routes.



Prior to construction, portions of the La Crosse River Trail (right) were an abandoned railroad line

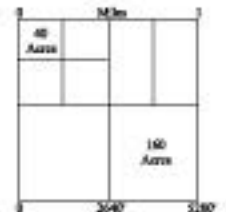
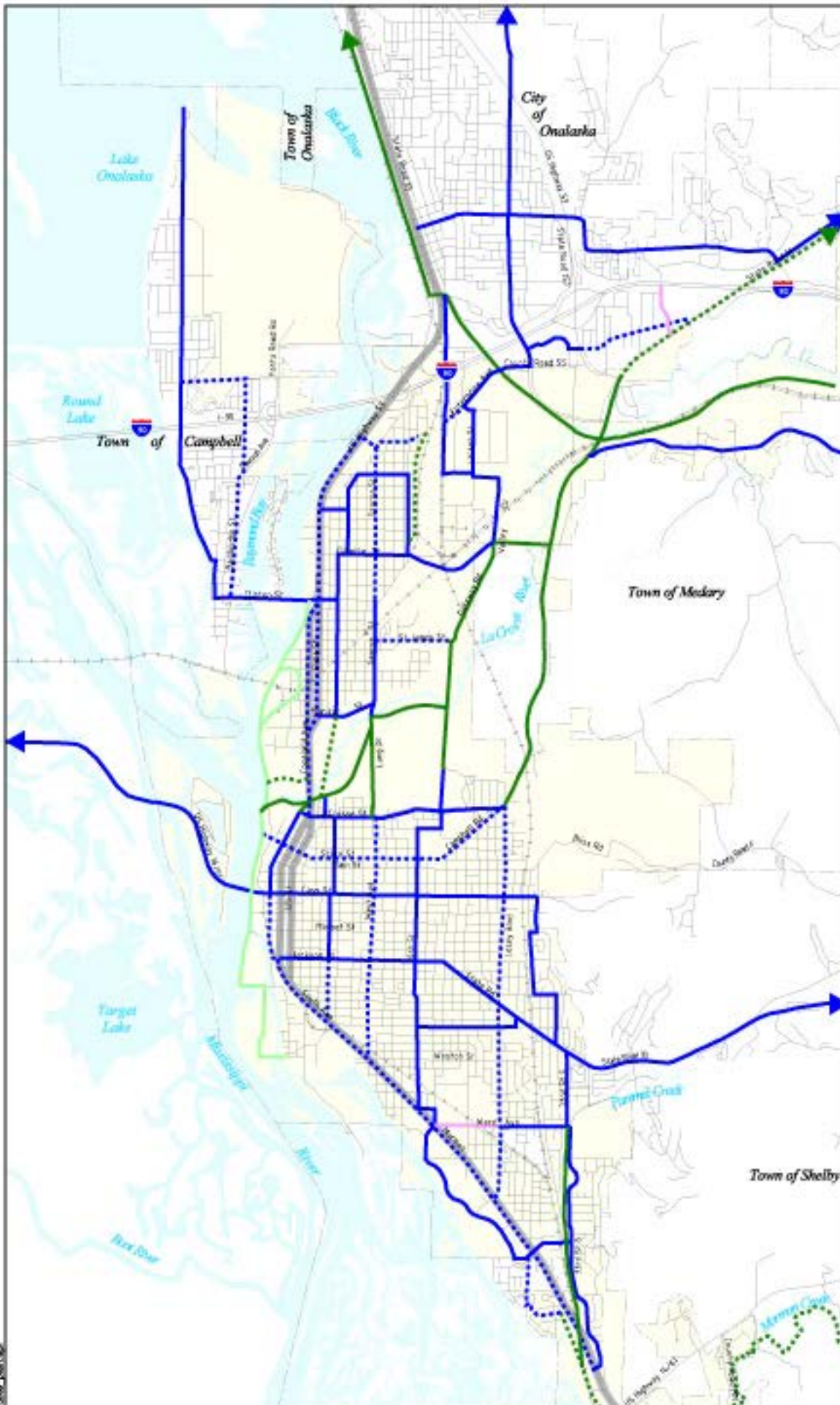
Figure 5-12

Proposed Multi-Use Trails and Bicycle Routes

-  Existing Bike Lane
-  Existing Bike Route
-  Existing Multi-Use Trails
-  Potential Bike Route Connections
-  Potential River Walk Extension
-  Potential Multi-Use Trails

Great River Road National Scenic Byway

-  Great River Road



**City of La Crosse
Comprehensive Plan**

Objective 11: Transit. Create an environment in which transit can compete as a viable transportation choice and thereby increase ridership and reduce auto trips and parking needs.

In order to create a transit-friendly environment, transit must also be well integrated with land use. It must provide comfortable and convenient access to places people need and want to go. It is essential that transit be considered in conjunction with land use and development decisions. Highly segregated, auto-oriented land uses cannot be served effectively by transit. The most effective long-term strategy for making transit a more viable transportation alternative is to implement the land use recommendations described in the Land Use plan element.

Excessive parking requirements and subsidized parking facilities create a disincentive for transit use. Ample, low-cost or free parking makes driving the easy choice for commuting and other trips. Therefore, transit needs to offer other advantages to driving, such as providing time or cost savings to attract non-transit dependent riders (i.e., those who have access to a car). In addition, transit must be convenient if it is to compete with the car.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Downtown Transit Center.** The City shall finalize the location and construct a new transit center downtown. The transit center should be a pedestrian-oriented facility integrated with its surroundings. Integrating retail and/or other services (e.g., childcare) will make the transit center more attractive to existing and potential transit riders.
- 2. New Development.** The City shall encourage new development proposals to provide access for transit. Transit access should be routinely considered during the site plan and development review process.
- 3. Promote Transit Pass Programs.** The City shall work cooperatively with MTU to expand and promote the use of pass programs similar to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's program and Boulder, Colorado's "Eco-Pass" program. This program should be promoted to colleges, downtown businesses, and major employers.
- 4. Transit Investments.** The City should work with MTU to invest in transit buses, facilities, and technologies that will enhance transit service and image.

The condition and quality of transit facilities greatly impact potential customer's perceptions of service. Updated, attractive buses and facilities will help to attract choice riders.

- 5. Paratransit Service.** MTU should continue to explore strategies for providing cost-effective transit service to persons with disabilities. Given the per trip cost of current paratransit service, MTU may want to identify strategies for making fixed route buses more accessible and attractive to disabled riders (e.g., converting to low-floor buses).

Federal law requires that MTU provide paratransit services to persons who cannot utilize available fixed route (bus) services. MTU paratransit service provides curb to curb transportation with special wheelchair accessible vehicles. While providing affordable transportation for persons with disabilities is desirable, paratransit service compared with regular fixed route service is significantly more expensive.

Commercial, Industrial and Regional Modes

Business, industry and people leaving from or coming to the La Crosse area rely on good inter-regional transportation facilities. The La Crosse area has a surprising array of such facilities. The City maintains a regional airport that provides several regularly scheduled flights daily, an Amtrak station with daily passenger rail service, and intercity bus access. The City also enjoys freight rail access and port facilities along the Mississippi River. Figure 5-13 identifies commercial/industrial and regional transportation modes in La Crosse.

Inter-City Bus

Inter-city bus service provides an affordable travel alternative for those travelling outside La Crosse or the Coulee Region. Inter-city bus service is provided by private carriers including, Greyhound and Jefferson Lines. Inter-city bus customers are generally less likely to own a vehicle and more likely to be transit dependent. Therefore, inter-city bus stations should be accessible by MTU routes.

Objective 12: Inter-city Bus. Ensure convenient access to inter-city bus service.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Inter-city Bus Integration.** The City and MTU shall work in partnership with inter-city bus companies to accommodate and integrate inter-city bus service in the design and development of the Downtown Transit Center.

Airport

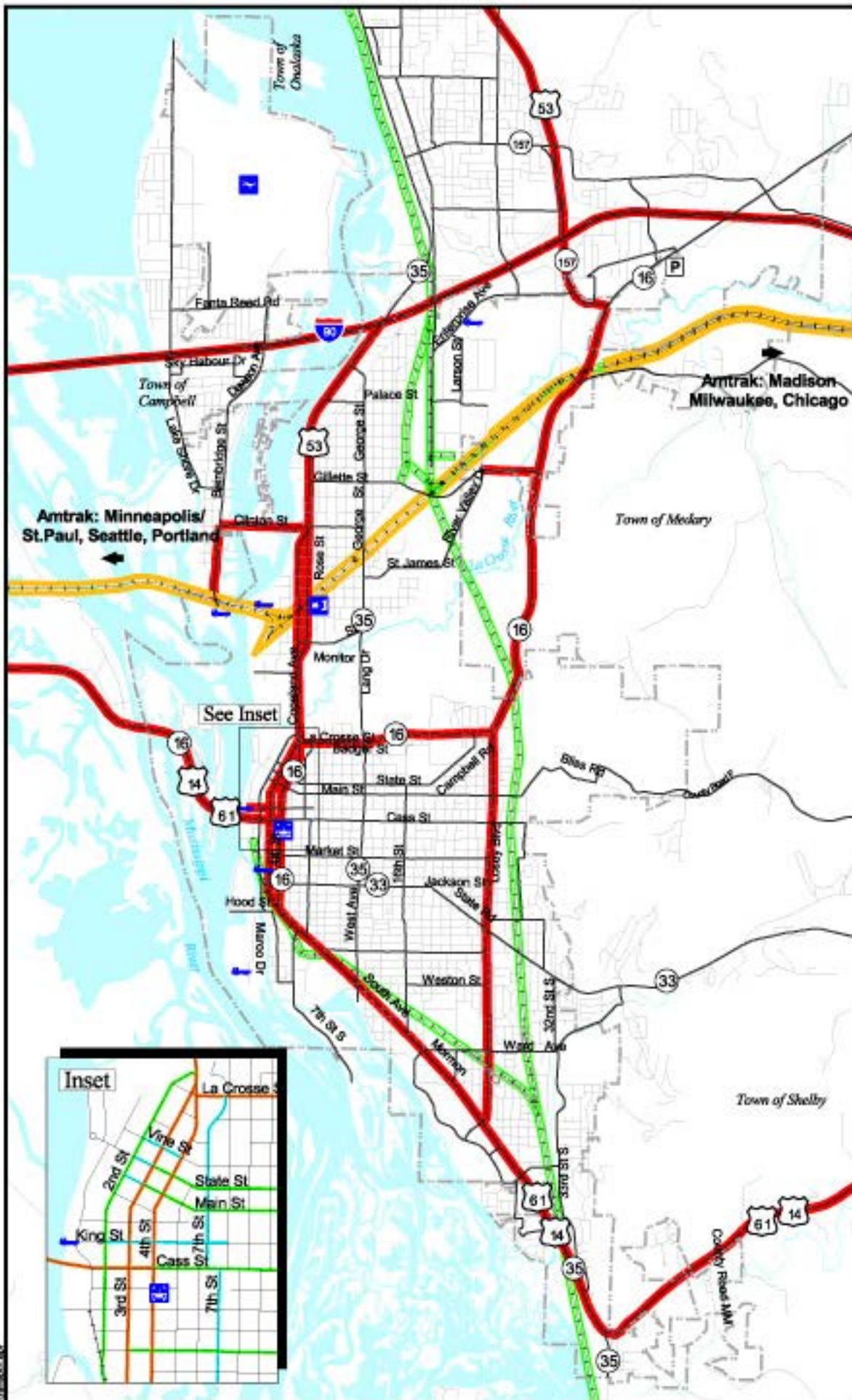
The City of La Crosse Airport is in the process of completing an *Airport Master Plan*, which is scheduled for completion in 2002. The plan will address noise issues as they relate to incompatible land uses within noise impact areas adjacent to the airport. While the current number of impacted properties is small, care should be taken to make sure future development decisions take airport noise and other impacts into consideration.

With regard to anticipated growth in air transport, passenger travel service is expected to continue to grow. However, no significant increase in airfreight activity is expected.

Access to the airport on French Island is currently sufficient. However, airport access would benefit from improvements to the Interstate-90 interchange at CTH B.

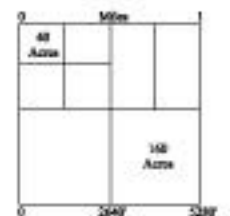
Figure 5-13

Commercial, Industrial and Regional Transportation Modes



- Municipal Boundary
- City of La Crosse
- Water
- Airport Terminal
- Major Freight Terminal
- Rail Passenger Terminal
- Bus Terminal
- Park-and-Ride Lots

- Major Roads
- Local Streets
- NHS Route
- Railroad
- Amtrak Line



City of La Crosse
Comprehensive Plan



The *Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020* was developed by WisDOT and identifies information related to the state’s aviation system. The Plan is used by WisDOT’s Bureau of Aeronautics to pre-qualify airport improvement project submitted by airport sponsors for funding consideration. The airport system plan does not include specific recommendations relating to airport facilities or operations.

Objective 13: Airport. Maintain and improve passenger and freight air service while minimizing impacts to surrounding neighborhoods.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. La Crosse Municipal Airport Master Plan.** The City should work to implement the recommendations of the *Airport Master Plan*. This will include addressing land use issues related to airport noise impacts and safety issues.



Terminal at the City of La Crosse Airport

Passenger Rail

La Crosse has the unique distinction of having an Amtrak depot, which provides passenger service to Chicago and Minneapolis for Coulee Area residents. There is an initiative underway - the Midwest Regional Rail System (MWRRS) – that proposes a passenger rail service which would serve the Midwest region with Chicago serving as the hub. If developed as planned, the MWRRS would greatly increase the amount and quality of passenger rail service and decrease travel times to destinations in the Midwest.

The Governors’ Blue Ribbon Task Force on Passenger Rail Service recommended that the State, in partnership with the Federal government, take the lead in implementing and funding this inter-city passenger rail service. Their report suggests that local government or the private sector should participate by providing some funding with respect to station development and/or area improvements adjacent to stations.

Objective 14: Passenger Rail. Promote quality passenger rail service from the La Crosse Depot thereby supporting efforts to create the Midwest Regional Rail System.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Amtrak Depot.** The City shall explore opportunities to improve access to the Amtrak depot from major roadways and determine how to better integrate the depot into the community.
- 2. Midwest Regional Rail Initiative.** The City shall continue to be involved with the Midwest Rail Initiative and monitor progress toward implementation.



Renovated Amtrak Depot

Freight Rail

Generally, freight movements are not given much thought unless there is a conflict, such as truck traffic through a neighborhood or train whistles during the night. However, the movement of freight to and from the area serves a vital economic function. La Crosse benefits from having access to water, rail, air and truck freight modes. These transportation activities need to be integrated into a transportation decision-making process.

Railroads provide a very efficient and cost-effective means of moving freight, which benefits consumers. However, there is the potential for conflicts between rail and nearby land uses. Railroad street crossings also pose a potential safety concern. Increases in rail activities and corresponding increases in vehicular traffic at crossings should be monitored to identify potential safety problems.

Objective 15: Freight Rail. Maintain viable freight rail service while minimizing land use, safety and traffic impacts.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Rail and Land Use.** The City shall assess changes in rail activity and/or adjacent land uses to anticipate potential conflicts.
- 2. Railroad Crossing Safety.** The City shall work with appropriate jurisdictions to monitor increases and rail activity and vehicular traffic at railroad crossings in order to assess safety risks.



Freight yards in La Crosse

Trucking

Trucking freight movements are essential to the local and regional economy. Most finished consumer goods arrive by truck and need to have access to commercial activity centers. Truck routes need to direct truckers to their destinations on the most appropriate roads in order to minimize truck noise and safety impacts in residential areas and reduce wear and tear on roads that are not suited to heavy vehicle traffic.

Objective 16: Trucking. Ensure safe and efficient truck access through the City and to major truck destinations while minimizing impacts to neighborhoods.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Truck Routes.** The City shall identify and mark truck routes to encourage truck traffic to use appropriate roadways while discouraging travel through residential areas when possible.
- 2. Industrial Site Access.** The City shall work with WisDOT, La Crosse County, and LAPC to design and build truck routes and roads uses to access industrial areas to adequately accommodate heavy truck traffic. Roadways to and through areas targeted for industrial redevelopment (see Land Use and Economic Development plan elements) should be given priority for reconstruction.

Waterways

River transportation has been an important part of the City's economy since La Crosse was founded on the banks of the Mississippi River. While rail, trucking, and air transport account for much of the commercial transportation today, La Crosse still maintains a viable working river port. A working river port, not only serves an economic purpose, it also serves as a point of interest for the community and tourism.

The *Port of La Crosse Wisconsin Harbor Plan 1999* was prepared by the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, through a contract with the City and La Crosse County. The plan takes a comprehensive look at port and waterway issues. Redevelopment of riverfront property represents the most challenging issue for port activity. Replacing non-river dependent industries with land uses that benefit from a riverfront location such as hotels, restaurants, and other uses, is a redevelopment trend that is occurring in many waterfront cities. However, a balance needs to be struck between development of new retail and recreational uses and preservation of river-dependent industrial land uses. There may be opportunities to consolidate transportation activities in existing locations that reduce the conflict between riverfront land uses.

Objective 17: Waterways/Port. Promote safe and efficient river access while minimizing potential conflicts between commercial transportation and recreational waterway users.

The City should preserve and promote water-transportation uses along the riverfront. Maintaining railroad access to port facilities is important in order for multi-modal transportation options to remain available.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Riverfront Land and Port Activity.** The City shall work with the Harbor Commission to preserve river-dependent industries and necessary railroad access while allowing appropriate redevelopment of non-river dependent land uses along the riverfront in locations where negative impacts between uses are minimal or can be mitigated.



The La Crosse riverfront is home to several river-dependent industries that rely on barge transport

Implementation Program for the Transportation Plan

This section describes the major actions involved in implementing the Transportation plan element. Table 5-6 is intended to guide City staff and the Common Council in setting priorities for capital budgeting and staff allocation. It is expected that this table will be reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, to establish new priorities.

Priority ranking is defined as follows:

- 1 = highest or short-term priority
- 2 = secondary or mid-term priority
- 3 = lowest priority or represents on-going activities

Table 5-6 : Implementation Plan

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	WIS 16 Transportation Study. Endorse and assist in the implementation of the <i>WIS 16 Transportation Study</i> recommendations, which are consistent with the objectives and strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan.	Planning Department Planning Commission Common Council
1	Street Design Standards. Incorporate the principles and design guidelines identified in this plan into the Unified Development Ordinance.	Planning Department Public Works Department Plan Commission Common Council
1	Access Management Plan. Develop and implement access management plans in conjunction with streetscape improvements for principal and minor arterial streets identified in Figure 5-3.	Planning Department Public Works Department
1	Multi-modal Transportation Plan. Develop and implement a multi-modal transportation plan.	Planning Department Public Works Department
1	Intersection Improvements. Implement intersection safety improvements listed on page 5-12 and 5-14 and traffic flow improvements listed on page. 5-32 through 5-33.	Public Works Department
1	Downtown Transit Center. Finalize location and construct a new downtown transit center.	Municipal Transit Utility Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	Parking. Evaluate and update parking requirements to allow greater parking flexibility and reflect typical parking demand.	Planning Department Public Works Department Plan Commission Common Council
2	Traffic Calming. Support the use of appropriate traffic calming strategies to discourage cut-through traffic and/or to slow traffic speeds where deemed appropriate. Institute a public/neighborhood initiated process for addressing traffic calming needs in neighborhoods.	Planning Department Public Works Department Plan Commission Common Council
2	Parkway System. Create a system of parkways, as illustrated on Figure 7-5, in conjunction with street reconstruction, major redevelopment and new development.	Planning Department Public Works Department Parks Department Common Council
2	Multi-Use Trails. Continue to develop connections to the City’s existing and proposed multi-use trails to provide an integrated network of trails. On-road facilities should be developed to provide connections to the trails and throughout the community (see Figure 5-12).	Planning Department Public Works Department Parks Department Common Council
2	On Road Bicycle Facilities. Include appropriate bike facilities as part of major roadway reconstruction. Bike racks and enclosed lockers should be encouraged at schools, major employment areas and commercial destinations.	Planning Department Public Works Department
2	“Big-Box” Ordinance. Develop and adopt standards specific to the design of “big-box” and other strip-type commercial development as part of the Unified Development Ordinance	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council
3	Update and Refine the Travel Demand Model. Work with LAPC to update the travel demand model with 2000 census data when available and consider refining the model to account for mixed land uses and multi-modal transportation improvements.	Planning Department Public Works Department

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
3	Intersection Safety Analysis. Conduct detailed analysis of high crash frequency locations and implement appropriate safety measures.	Public Works Department Planning Department
3	Streetscape Improvements. Continue to install streetscape improvements such as trees, ornamental lighting, special pavement, and banners in conjunction with street reconstruction, new street construction, or other public improvement projects.	Planning Department Public Works Department Common Council
3	Transportation Demand Management (TDM). In conjunction with WisDOT LAPC, and TMA, develop and implement a transportation demand management plan.	Planning Department Public Works Department Municipal Transit Utility
3	Three-Lane Road Configuration. Evaluate the use of a 3-lane design concept (i.e., one through lane in each direction with a two-way left turn lane or dedicated left turn lanes) for streets currently designed as four-lane undivided roadways and for arterial streets with approximately 10,000 to 17,000 AADT.	Planning Department Public Works Department

Note: Because of the multi-jurisdictional nature of the transportation system, most recommendations will require the cooperation and participation of WDOT and the LAPC.

Committed Transportation Projects

The following roadway projects in the City are programmed in the La Crosse Area Transportation Improvement Plan and/or State Six-Year Program.

- CTH B from STH 16 to Peters Road.** This is a safety project, which will reconstruct CTH B from a 2-lane rural section to a 3-lane TWLTL and add bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the primary access to the La Crosse River Trail and Northern Hills Elementary School. The current configuration is a narrow 2-lane rural section. It will tie into the 3-lane TWLTL, which runs from Peters Road to the school.
- USH 53 (Rose Street) from Windsor Street to Livingston Street.** This is a safety project, which will reconstruct Rose Street from 4-lanes to 5-lanes TWLTL to complete the widening of the southern portion to that segment of USH 53 from Clinton Street to

IH-90. This project will provide safe access to the numerous commercial and industrial sites along USH 53 in this area.

- **Cass Street Bridge.** This bridge project will eliminate the existing bottleneck that exists between two 4-lane segments on USH 14/16/61 as it crosses the Mississippi River by adding a second 2-lane bridge immediately south of the existing bridge.
- **STH 35 (Lang Drive) from Monitor Street to St Cloud Street.** This is a safety project, which will reconstruct Lang Drive from 4-lanes to 5-lanes from Monitor Street to St Cloud Street. This project will provide safe access to the numerous commercial sites along this segment.
- **STH 16 (La Crosse Street) from Oakland Street to Losey Boulevard.** This project will reconstruct La Crosse Street from Oakland Street to Losey Boulevard and add traffic signals at East Avenue.
- **USH 14/61(South Avenue) from Green Bay Street to Ward Avenue.** This project will reconstruct South Avenue from 4-lanes to 5-lanes from Green Bay Street to Ward Avenue.
- **STH 16 from French Road to Vets Park.** STH 16 from French Road to Vets Park was resurfaced in 1998. It is then programmed to be reconstructed from 2-lanes to 4-lanes in 2011-2020.
- **USH 14/61 from Brickyard Lane to CTH M.** This project will reconstruct USH 14/61 from Brickyard Lane to CTH M from 2-lanes to 4-lanes including a new bridge over Mormon Coulee Creek. It has been determined that this project will not warrant a Major Investment Study (MIS).

Appendix A:

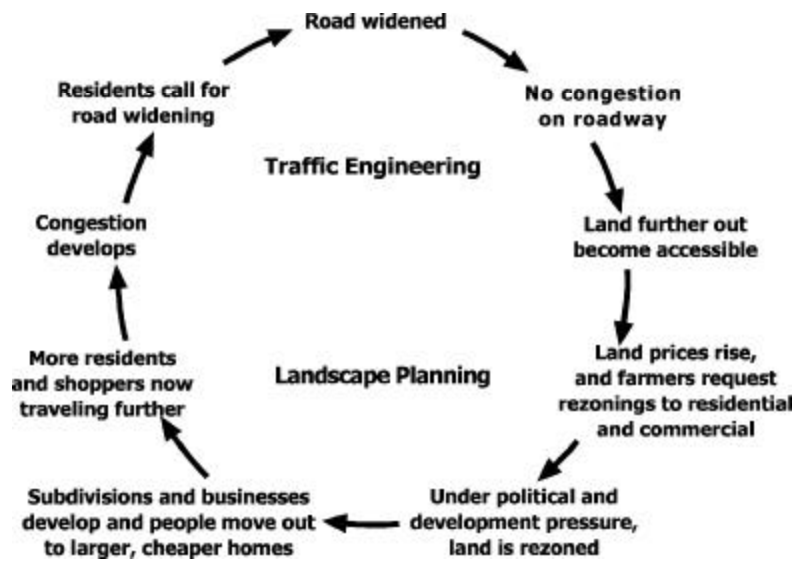
A Smart Growth Approach to Transportation Planning

Development Patterns and Trip Demand

Many factors in the basic organization of daily life contribute to the production of trips in a modern community, most importantly the separation of place of work and school from the home and distribution of goods, services, entertainment, and recreation activities at centralized locations.

Land Use – Transportation Cycle: The planning of cities with large, exclusive land-use zones connected by roadways has produced an urban form that accommodates and is dependent on the private automobile. In some instances zoning ordinances prescribe a separation of uses, large parking lots and site designs that increase trip demand. In other cases, private development practices lead the process and result in the creation of new or wider roads. Figure 5A-1 illustrates this cycle between development and demand for transportation facilities.

Figure 5A-1 Transportation Land Use Relationship



Source: *Coulee Visions: Creating Quality Choices for the La Crosse Region.*

Given the physical constraints in the Coulee Region and the limited amount of developable land in La Crosse, this land use and transportation cycle presents challenges. New development, both in and outside the City will increase traffic. The cost of expanding the roadway system will continue to rise and there will be higher maintenance and reconstruction costs as miles traveled per vehicle increases. Consideration of new

methods for addressing the relationship between development patterns, trip demand and the provision of transportation infrastructure is a key part of the overall Smart Growth strategy for La Crosse.

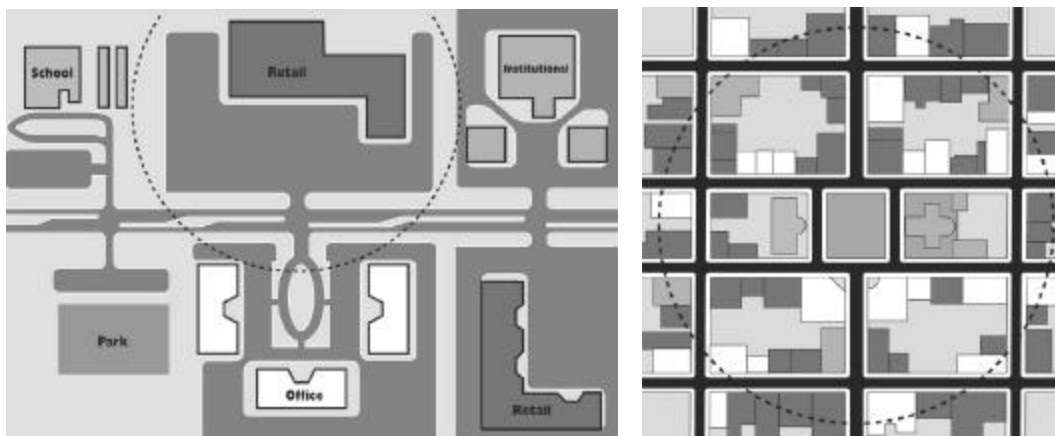
Land Use Pattern. The City of La Crosse was originally laid out in a grid of streets which form regular development blocks. Many older sections of the City contain a mix of uses that allows for access between destinations by walking. This is contrasted by areas built to accommodate access via automobiles; for example the “big box” and strip-type shopping areas on the north (Valley Mall) and south sides of La Crosse. In these locations, walking is discouraged by the scale of development, the highway width (Highway 16 and South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road, respectively), and lack of sidewalks or cross-walks.

Figure 5A-2 depicts both a conventional development pattern and a traditional development pattern. The dotted circle represents a 500-foot radius, considered a comfortable walking distance. The same land uses and parking are included in both images. However, the arrangement and mix of land uses in the image on the right allows a variety of activities to be accessible within a short walking distance, whereas the image on the left requires a driving trip to access each different land use. The traditional mixed land use pattern creates a “park once” environment and reduces the total number of trips.

The conventional pattern requires all trips to load onto or cross the arterial street to access any other destination. As a result, local trips are thrown into the traffic mix with long distance trips, which the arterial street are designed for. In contrast, the traditional development pattern with a grid street system allows local trips to avoid the arterial streets (and congestion), by using alternative routes.

On a macro scale, the conventional approach, with very segregated residential areas, requires all trips to funnel to arterial streets. On the other hand, in the traditional development pattern, housing is less segregated from commercial and work locations, allowing people to live closer to work and other activities, which results in shorter travel distances. Furthermore, the grid pattern street network allows these close in trips to avoid

Figure 5A-2 Conventional Development and Traditional Development



Source: *Coulee Visions: Creating Quality Choices for the La Crosse Region.*

busy arterial streets by using local streets, perhaps by walking or biking.

Grid Pattern Streets: Much of La Crosse is constructed on a grid pattern or modified grid pattern street network. There are some clear advantages to grid pattern street networks including:

- Greater overall road capacity.
- Increased route choices for local trips.
- Direct routes for biking and walking.

Grid pattern streets still maintain a hierarchical street function as described in the functional classification section. However, traffic is more dispersed throughout the road network. Because of traffic dispersion and increased route options, a grid pattern street network has greater capacity than the conventional street pattern where all roads funnel onto one arterial routes (see Figure 5A-3).

Figure 5A-3 Grid Street vs. Conventional Street Patterns

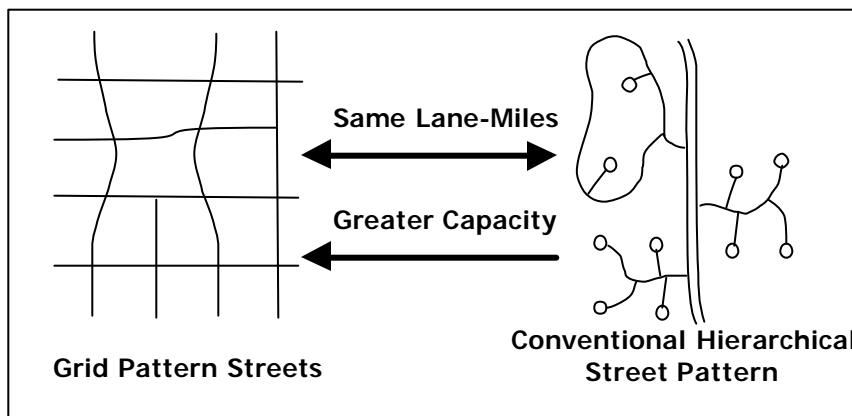
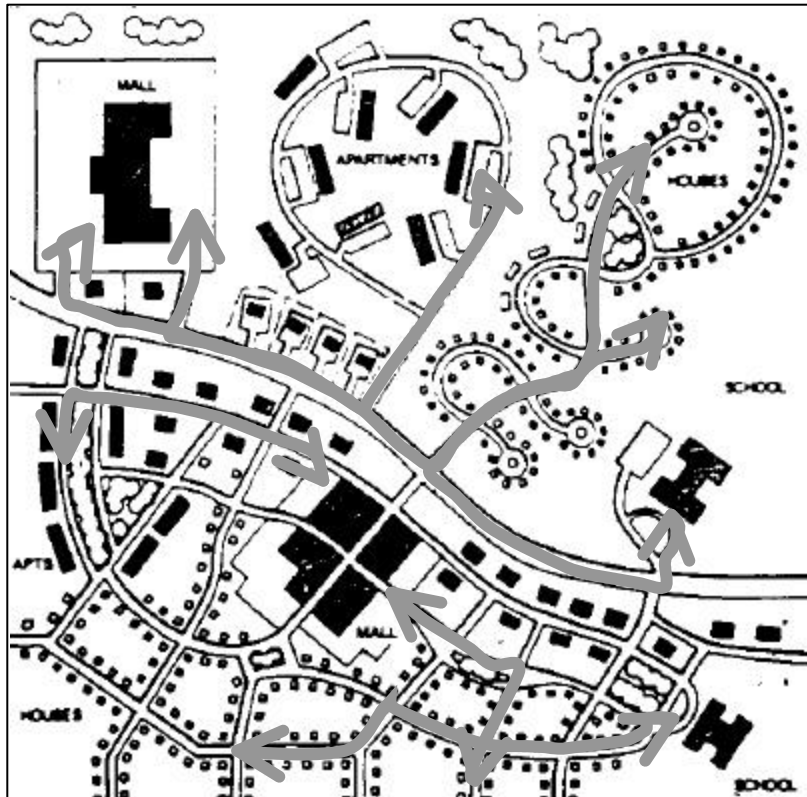


Figure 5A-4 illustrates, in a slightly exaggerated manner, the relationship between development type and street pattern. The diagram shows an arterial roadway serving two distinct street patterns. The top half of the figure illustrates a hierarchical or dendritic road network with segregated land uses, typical of most suburban development. The bottom half of the figure depicts the same land uses on grid pattern or modified grid pattern street network.

The purpose of principal arterial streets is primarily to accommodate longer trips. However, the conventional road network requires all trips, regardless of distance, to load onto the arterial roadway. As a result, the arterial street must accommodate local trips as well as long distance trips. Furthermore, once the arterial reaches a point of congestion, the only alternative available to travelers is to sit in congestion or not make the trip. It has been estimated that this type of street and land use pattern results in local trips accounting for up to 60-70 percent arterial traffic.

Figure 5A-4 Development on Grid vs. Conventional Street Pattern



In contrast, the grid pattern street network allows local trips to use alternative routes and avoid the arterial streets entirely. This image also illustrates how land use placement and mix can result in shorter trip distances, which make walking and biking more viable alternatives.

From a pedestrian perspective, the suburban road network and land use pattern creates long walking distances between land uses. Furthermore, pedestrians must walk along high-speed noisy arterial streets and cross multi-lane intersections to get to destinations. As a result, pedestrians experience an uncomfortable and unsafe walking environment, assuming that pedestrians are willing to make the trip at all.

In contrast, the grid pattern development allows pedestrians a direct route and walkable distance to destinations on local roads. As will be described later, local roads can and should provide a comfortable, safe and attractive pedestrian environment.

A common and legitimate concern is that grid pattern streets encourage cut through traffic. However, grid pattern streets should still follow a functional class hierarchy where design is a critical aspect of how the street will function. Arterial Streets should be designed to provide for convenient travel flow that will be attractive to longer distance trips, whereas local streets need to be designed to accommodate low speed, local access. Local streets should be designed for 20-25 mph traffic, which discourages through-traffic. If local street design is not enough to discourage through traffic, traffic calming

strategies can be used as well. Local street design and traffic calming are described later in more detail.

Some argue that cul-de-sacs are desirable and house sales at the end of cul-de-sacs sell at premium prices because people do not want traffic in front of their house. This should not be a surprise, if the options are between a house on a street with traffic and a house on a street with no traffic, most would choose the house with no traffic. However, neighborhoods with grid pattern streets can and do provide low volume traffic roads, which when designed properly, provide desirable housing options with minimal traffic impacts. These grid pattern neighborhoods offer environments that provide safe, comfortable, and attractive places to walk and bike.

Traffic Analysis and Management

A main concern that drives much transportation planning is roadway capacity and congestion. At the present time, La Crosse does not appear to have significant capacity problems, with the exception of north-south traffic movements across the marsh. This has been the subject of much community discussion and is described in greater detail in Appendix B.

Congestion. Just as capacity increases have unintended consequences (e.g., induced trips and land use shifts), so too does congestion. The traditional response to congestion or forecasted congestion has been to widen roads and increase capacity. Capacity improvements initially reduce travel delays and personal travel costs. However, these benefits tend to have several long term, and perhaps less desirable consequences as well (See Figure 5A-5). In contrast, accepting congestion increases travel delays and personal travel costs, but may result in consequences that are more desirable in the long-term. (see Figure 5A-6).

The results of the Comprehensive Plan Citizen Survey appear to be somewhat contradictory, since 56 percent of the randomly selected survey participants considered congestion a problem, but 51 percent did not think that driving north and south through town was a big problem. Yet, the north-south routes experience the heaviest traffic congestion. The survey results may suggest that while congestion may be considered a problem, it is not necessarily considered a “big problem” and other issues may be of greater importance.

Traffic congestion is generally qualified as an assigned LOS based on the traffic characteristics given an estimated traffic capacity (see Figure 5A-7). Level of Service conditions were determined for La Crosse’s functionally classified streets based on 1999 AADT and the generalized capacity limits used in the Travel Demand Model (see Figures 5A-8 Details A-D). Because of the general nature of this analysis, specific congestion problems related to intersections, lots of driveways, or other unique road segment characteristics are not illustrated on the following maps. Furthermore, because this analysis is based on daily traffic, peak hour characteristics unique to road segments are not identified in the maps. However, these maps clearly illustrate that the heaviest traffic

is concentrated within the north-south corridor routes, including: Highway 53 and STH 16 north of La Crosse Street (currently operating at LOS E) and STH 35 (currently operating at LOS D).

Figure 5A-5 Conventional Approach to Transportation Planning

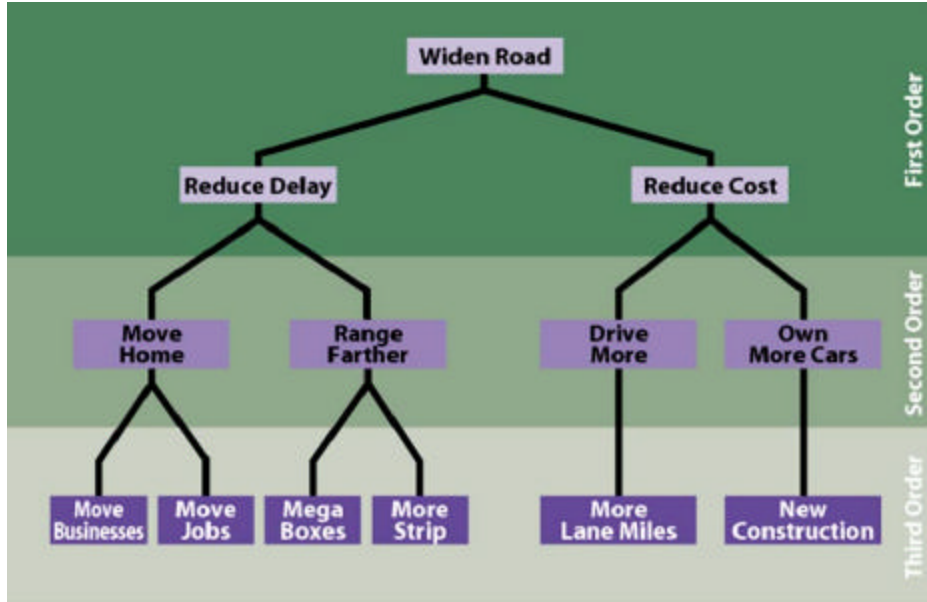
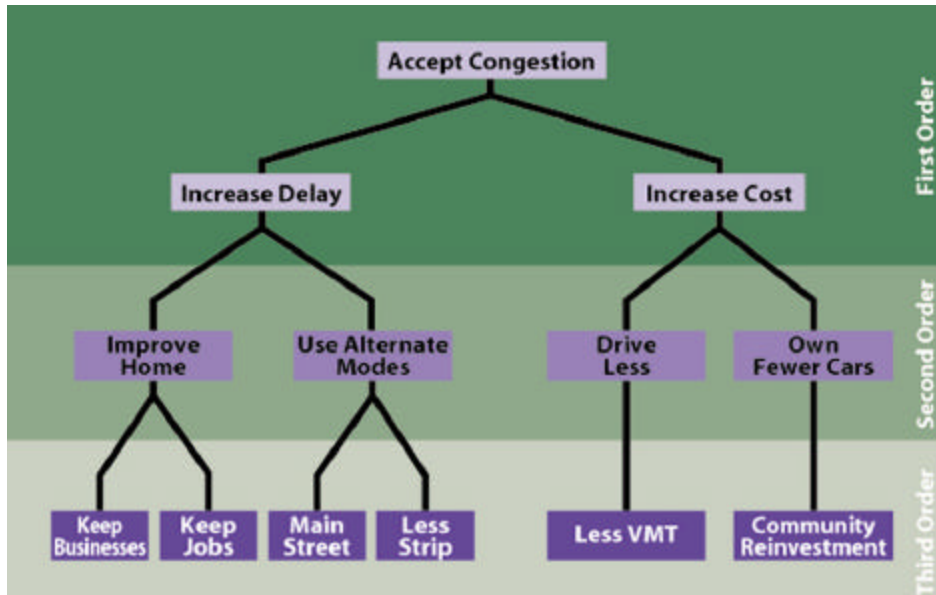


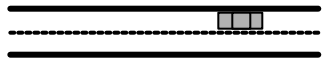
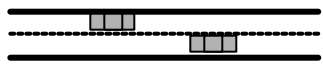
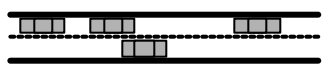

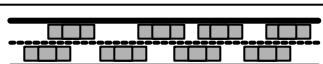

Figure 5A-6 Multi-modal Approach to Transportation Planning



Source: *Coulee Visions: Creating Quality Choices for the La Crosse Region*.

2020 Traffic Forecasts and Level of Service (LOS). Socioeconomic data, developed from the Land Use Plan, was entered into the travel demand model to generate traffic forecasts for the year 2020. Figure 5A-9 illustrates the LOS for roadways and the projected traffic volumes. The results assume that the Land Use Plan is fully realized by 2020. Results from the travel model indicate that increases in congestion are likely to occur along the major north-south corridors. According to model results, Highway 53, STH 35 and STH 16 north of La Crosse Street, will reach a LOS E to F by 2020. Other sections along these corridors show a decreasing LOS by 2020.

Figure 5A-7 Levels of Service Descriptions

Level of Service	Description
A	 FREE FLOW. Low volumes and no delays.
B	 STABLE FLOW. Speeds restricted by travel conditions, minor delays.
C	 STABLE FLOW. Speeds and maneuverability closely controlled due to higher volumes.
D	 STABLE FLOW. Speeds considerably affected by change in operating conditions. High-density traffic
E	 UNSTABLE FLOW. Low speeds, considerable delay, volume slightly over capacity.
F	 FORCED FLOW. Very low speeds, volumes exceed capacity, long delays with stop-and-go traffic.

It is important to keep in mind that travel demand model forecasts have many limitations and the current model has not been calibrated (i.e., adjusted to simulate current conditions) since the last major update in 1995. However, the model is still useful in helping to understand potential long term traffic issues. It needs to be emphasized that while travel demand models are useful, they do not prescribe answers to potential congestion problems. The City may decide that attempting to solve the congestion problem may create a situation that is even less desirable than the congestion itself.

Travel Demand Modeling. Travel Demand Models are used to predict future traffic and congestion. In the past, new roads were constructed or existing roads widened in anticipation of congestion. Often, the traffic forecasts have been significantly lower than the actual traffic. To understand why this occurs it is important to understand how travel demand models work.

Travel demand models generally use the four-step process which determines: trip generation, trip distribution, mode choice, and traffic assignment in an effort to recreate existing traffic conditions in a computerized environment. The number of trips generated are estimated using population, dwelling units and types of employment located in small geographic areas. Where these trips go to, or are distributed, is based on trip types (e.g., home to work). Person trips are then converted to vehicle trips or transit trips. Lastly, trips are assigned to the computerized roadway network based on the most time efficient

route between trip destinations. Once the model can reasonably recreate existing traffic conditions, it is referred to as calibrated. It is assumed that if the model can recreate existing conditions, it will be a reliable tool to determine future traffic conditions, based on future population, employment, and land use forecasts.

Travel demand models are very useful tools in transportation planning for identifying potential traffic impacts. However, models are only as good as the data available and the reasonableness of the assumptions used. The current La Crosse Travel Demand Model used in the following analysis was created and calibrated in 1995. Because the 2000 census data by transportation analysis zone was not available at the time of this study, alternative data sources were used to generate current socioeconomic data for use in the model. Once the 2000 census data becomes available, the La Crosse metropolitan area model will need to be updated and validated with corresponding traffic data.

Future year traffic forecasts are based on assumptions about “when”, “where” and “if” future employment and population growth will occur, which is a challenging task in itself. Furthermore, transportation improvements that are made may influence the “when”, “where” and “if” of future growth. As noted, past traffic forecasts have tended to be lower than actual traffic in the planning year. These errors are the result of many factors. In part, low forecasts are due to the land use transportation interaction that occurs once a new or widened road is built (or even planned).

Once a roadway is widened or capacity improved, past experience has shown that changes in land uses are likely to result. Again, Figure 5A-1 illustrates the cyclical pattern of road development and land uses changes over time. Changes in land use that result from transportation improvements generally have not been considered in travel demand models, which explains, in part, why traffic forecasts have generally underestimated traffic volumes where traffic improvements have been made. These new trips that result as a result of roadway improvements are generally referred to as “induced” trips.

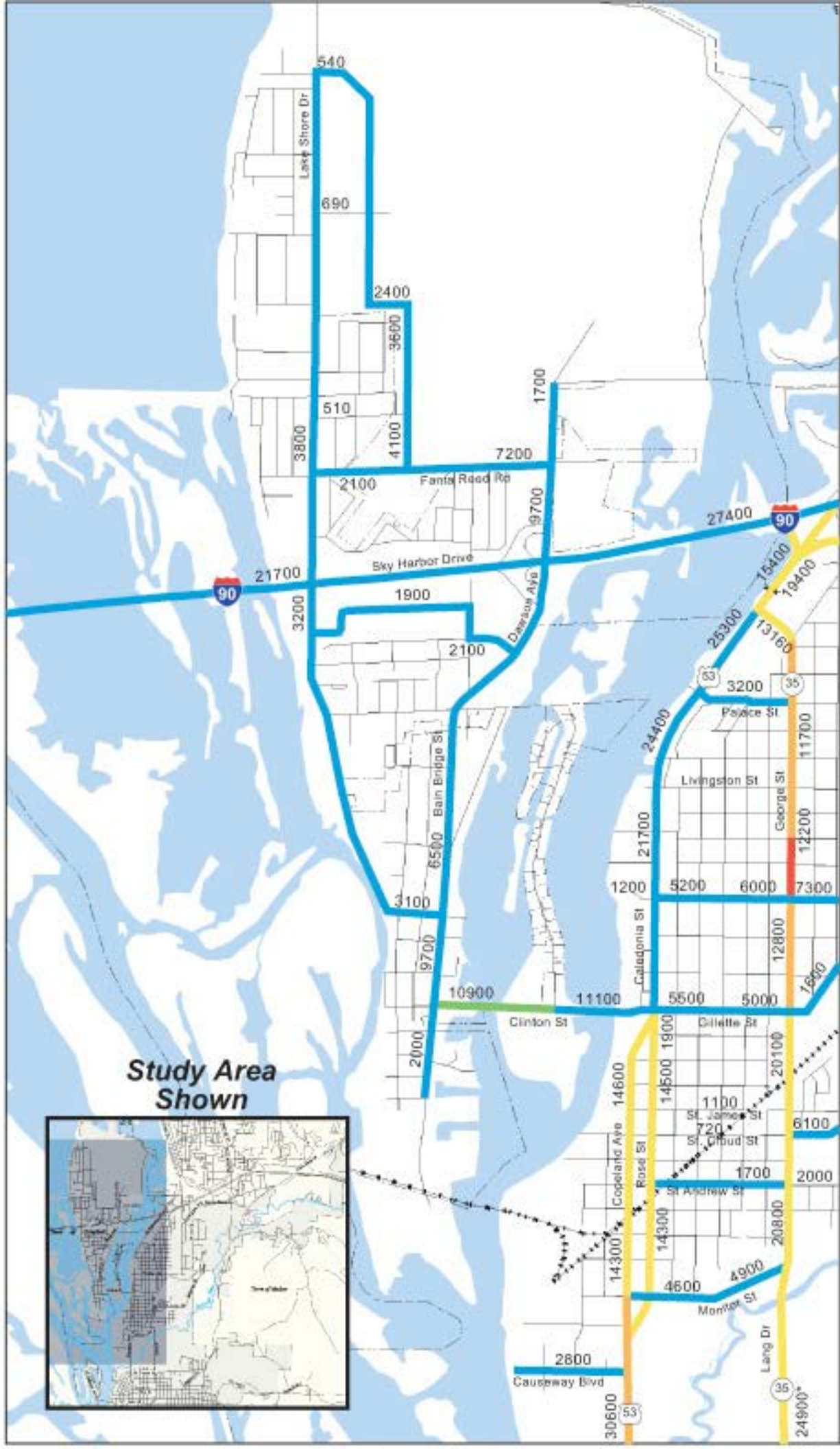
Figure 5A-8

Detail A

**1999 AADT
& Level of Service**

0000 1999 AADT
0000* 1996 AADT
Construction
disrupted traffic
counts at Lang Drive
in 1999.

- █ LOS B or Greater
- █ LOS C
- █ LOS D
- █ LOS E
- █ LOS F
- - - - City Boundary
- Roads
- ||||| Railroad Line



**Study Area
Shown**







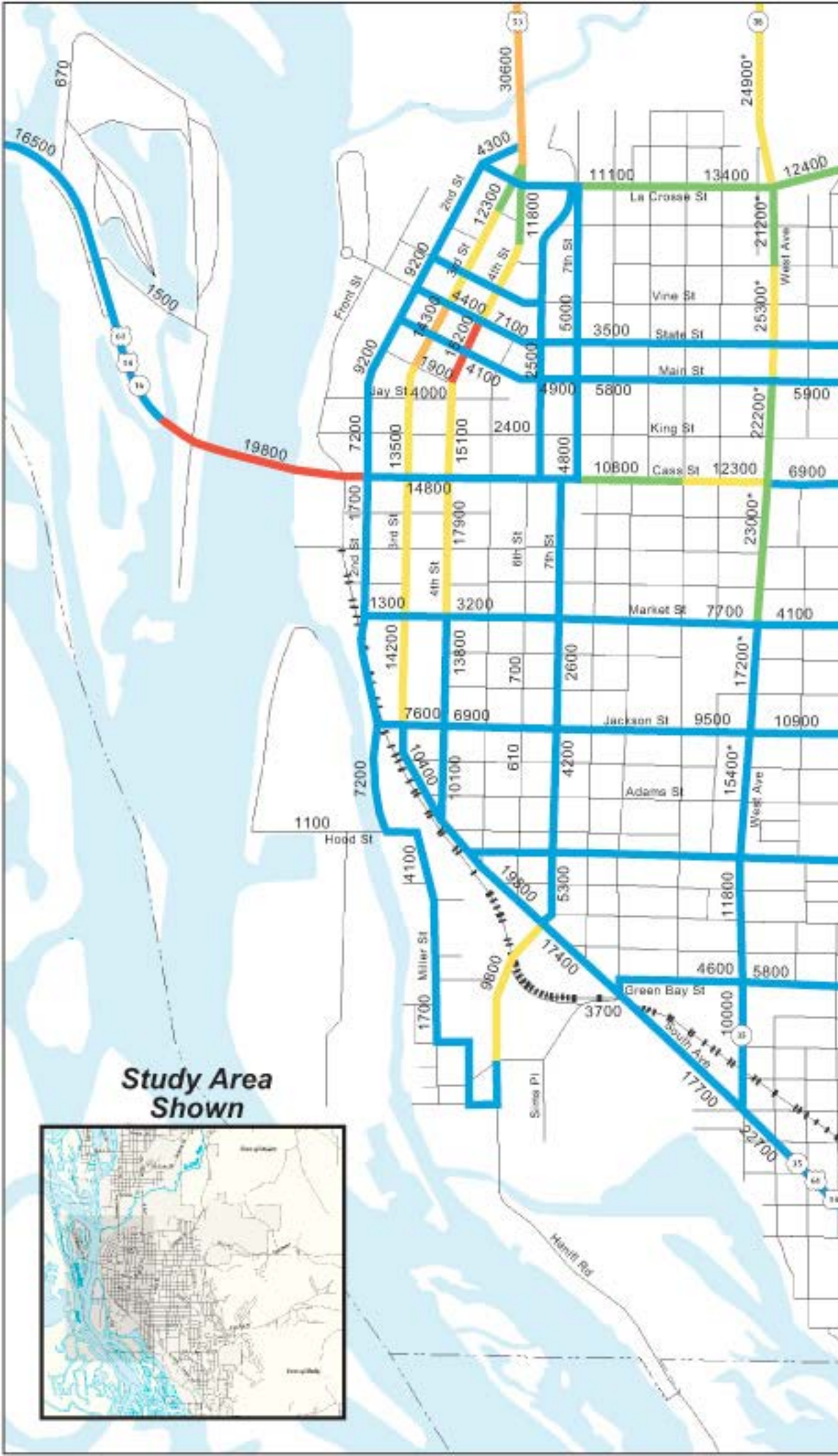
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Plan*

Figure 5A-8

Detail B
1999 AADT
& Level of Service

0000 1999 AADT
0000* 1996 AADT construction disruptive AADT counts, of Long Dr. in 1999.

-  LOS B or Greater
-  LOS C
-  LOS D
-  LOS E
-  LOS F
-  City Boundary
-  Roads
-  Railroad Line



Study Area Shown



Figure 5A-8

Detail C
1999 AADT
& Level of Service



- 0000 1999 AADT
- █ LOS B or Greater
- █ LOS C
- █ LOS D
- █ LOS E
- █ LOS F
- City Boundary
- Roads
- ||||| Railroad Line



Study Area Shown



Figure 5A-8

Detail D
1999 AADT
& Level of Service



City of
La Crosse

Comprehensive
Plan

Figure 5A-9

Detail A

2020 Travel Demand Forecast & Level of Service

- 0000 1999 AADT
- (0000) 2020 Forecast AADT
- LOS B or Greater
- LOS C
- LOS D
- LOS E
- LOS F
- City Boundary
- Roads
- Railroad Line



Study Area Shown

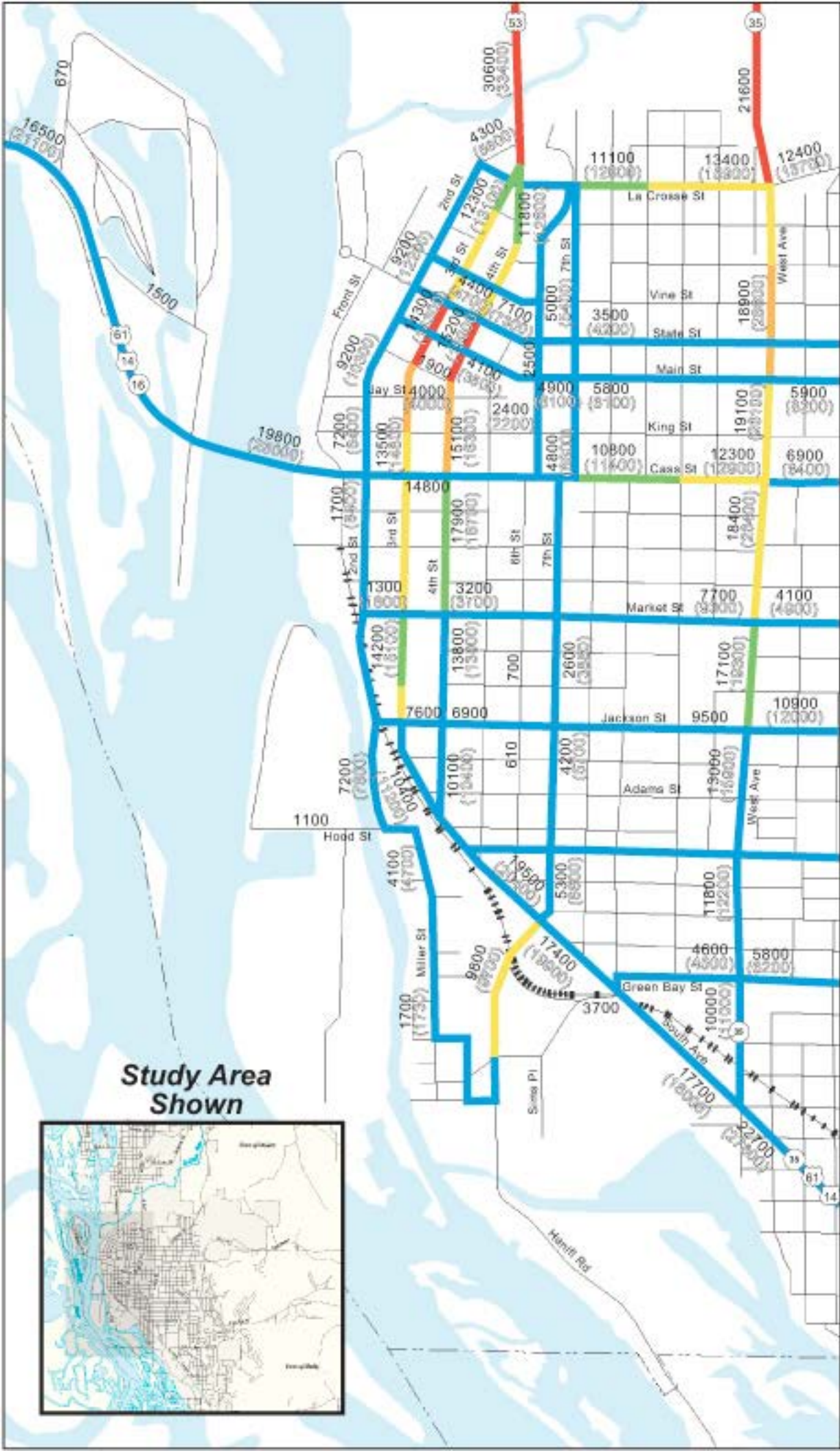


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Figure 5A-9

Detail B
2020 Travel Demand Forecast & Level of Service

- 0000 1999 AADT
- (0000) 2020 Forecast AADT
- █ LOS B or Greater
- █ LOS C
- █ LOS D
- █ LOS E
- █ LOS F
- - - - City Boundary
- Roads
- ||||| Railroad Line



Study Area Shown



Figure 5A-9

Detail C

2020 Travel Demand Forecast & Level of Service

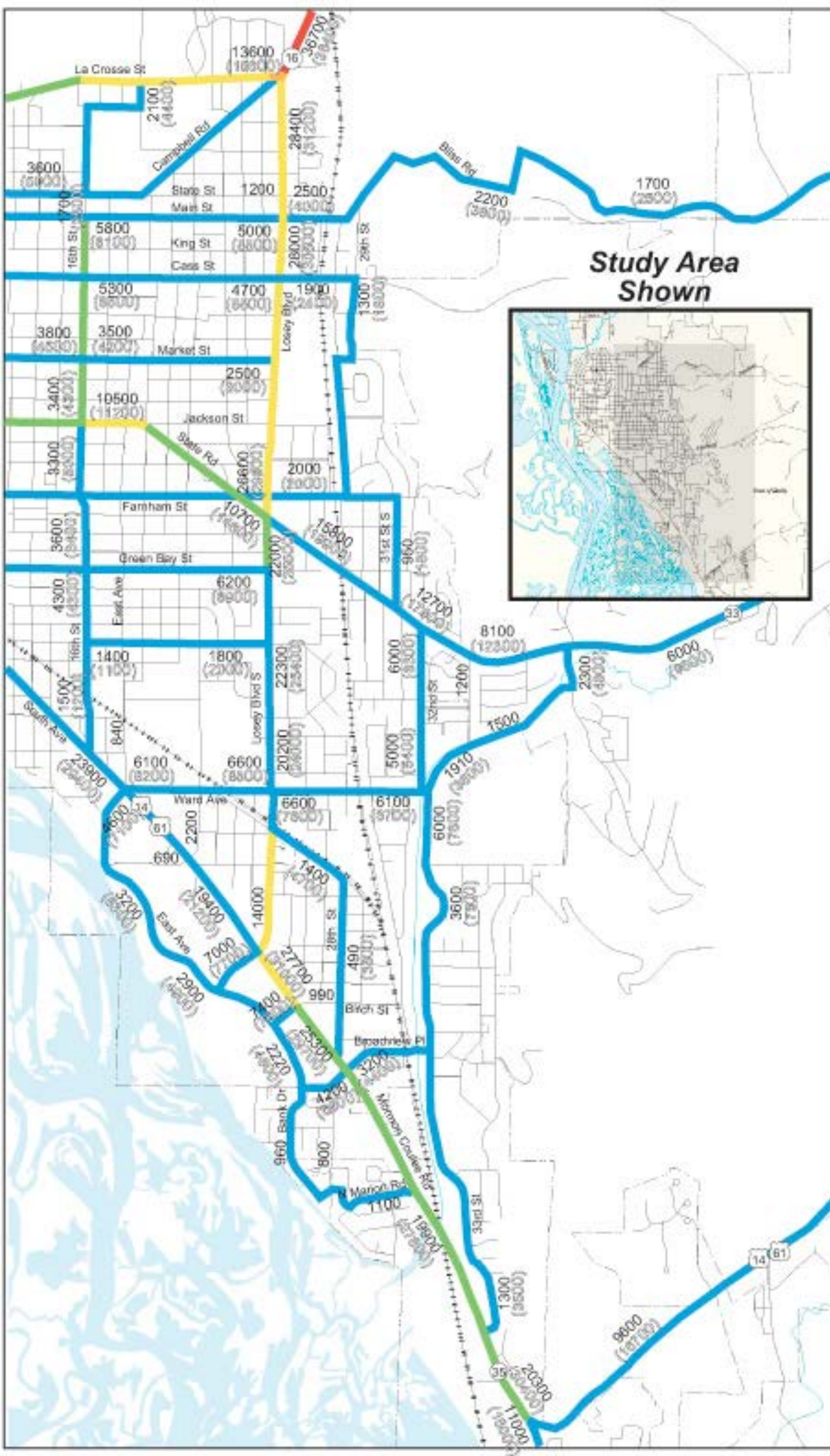


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Figure 5A-9

Detail D 2020 Travel Demand Forecast & Level of Service



City of La Crosse

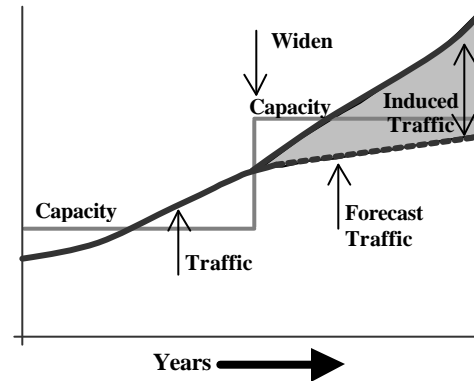
Comprehensive Plan

Induced Traffic. Induced traffic is the additional travel resulting from a transportation improvement, which would not have otherwise occurred. Due to improved roadway conditions people will:

- Change their route,
- Change their trip times,
- Change the number of trips they take,
- Change their mode of travel (e.g., public transit to driving), or
- Change their place of residence or workplace location.

Of the five types of induced trips identified above, the travel demand model only accounts for changes in trip routes, which explains, in part, why travel forecasts have generally underestimated the traffic impacts of major roadway improvements (see Figure 5A-10).

Figure 5A-10 Induced Traffic



Daily Travel Patterns. Traffic characteristics change throughout the day. Generally, morning peak traffic periods have very sharp increases in traffic that subside relatively quickly. The afternoon peak period, in contrast, tends to be more spread out. However, as congestion creates delays during the peak period, travelers will begin to change their routes (assuming a more advantageous one is available) or they will begin to change their travel times to avoid delays during peak traffic times. As a result, as congestion during peak times increases, trips begin to spread out throughout more of the day. From a system efficiency perspective, these behaviors are actually beneficial since more excess capacity is used during the off-peak periods. Assessing daily traffic patterns are useful, since it may not be an efficient use of resources to increase capacity solely to accommodate peak period traffic congestion when there is substantial excess capacity during the off-peak times.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM). TDM, as the name implies, addresses the demand side of transportation. The TDM approach to congestion mitigation focuses on user demand and behavior modification strategies to reduce drive-alone and peak-period travel. These strategies may include incentives for using transit or carpooling, encouraging flexible work time to decrease peak hour travel, or promoting mixed land uses that allow people to live within walking distance of work and other activities. TDM strategies include:

- Work hour rescheduling (e.g., staggered work hours, shortened work weeks, and flex-time hours).
- Employer-sponsored vanpools.
- Preferential or subsidized parking for vanpools and carpools.
- Employer subsidized bus passes.
- Telecommuting.
- Provision of bicycle facilities and incentives.

Large employers in the community add significantly to the peak hour transportation demand on the roadway system. Large employers are often in a better position to make policy changes that can affect traffic impacts near their work sites. One TDM technique is to encourage work hour rescheduling (flextime) for some of the largest employers in the region. This technique decreases peak hour demand by spreading out commute trips.

Free or subsidized employee parking is a benefit many workers value. However, it is only a benefit only if the employee drives to work. Employers can affect travel demand by converting free or subsidized parking benefits to a transportation monetary or “cash-out” benefit. Such a program would provide employees a cash benefit equivalent to the value of a current parking space. Employees would then have a choice of how to spend their transportation benefit.

While many would likely choose to use the benefit to pay for parking, others may choose to save some or all of the money by taking transit, carpooling, walking or biking. The advantage of such programs is that it does not take away from an existing benefit, but it does increase employee choices of how to use this benefit. Cash-out parking programs are particularly useful in downtown locations or in areas where parking is in short supply and/or where providing additional parking would be expensive (e.g., hospitals).

Access Management. Access management is the control and regulation of the spacing and design of driveways, medians, median openings and traffic signals. These strategies can increase capacity, improve traffic flow, enhance safety, and when combined with a streetscape plan, create an attractive environment.

The following strategies should be considered along congested corridors as part of an overall access management plan that encourages the use of:

- Controlled left turns.
- Raised medians.
- Combined driveways.
- Driveways located away from intersections.
- Driveway accesses from cross street where possible.
- Backage or frontage roads where appropriate.
- Design speeds compatible with adjacent land uses.

Access Management Strategies offer perhaps the best opportunity for accomplishing several transportation objectives in La Crosse. Some of these strategies have been implemented on La Crosse roadways, most notably the new section of Rose Street between Clinton Street and Livingston Street.

WisDOT promotes access management to maintain the operational efficiency and safety of state highways by controlling the type, number, and location of access points to the highway system. WisDOT has identified the following rationale for encouraging access management:

- Access points to the state highway system automatically increase the potential for crashes by introducing cross traffic on a free-flowing highway.
- Access points create operational problems by slowing the overall traffic flow to allow for slower vehicles that are pulling off the highway or onto the highway. High volumes of vehicles such as large trucks or farm machinery can further add to these operational problems.
- Cost impacts of access are placed on the individual/organization requesting the access.

WisDOT pursues access management through the following tools:

- Driveway Permits:
 - Any private access to the state highway system requires a permit.
 - The permit grants the right to work on state highway right of way, and the right to access the highway under certain conditions or restrictions.
 - Driveway permits are not permanent rights and may be revoked by WisDOT if misuse occurs. Permits may also be revoked if a highway improvement project requires the elimination of access points to maintain or increase the free flow of traffic for capacity and safety reasons.
 - Issuing or denying a driveway permit is based on specific standards such as highway geometry, sight distance, and proximity to other access points.
 - The type and maximum size of access is determined by the intended use of the property. A single-family dwelling may only require a simple driveway while a commercial property may require more extensive access.
 - Costs of constructing and maintaining private access points are borne by the property owner and not by WisDOT.
 - Determining the type of access required is based on standard land-use trip generation guidelines.
- Trans 233: Any division or assemblage of lands abutting existing state highways is subject to review by WisDOT. This includes subdivision plats, county plats, condominium plats, certified survey maps, plats of survey or a plain legal description with no survey.
- Controlled Access Projects: Entire segments of highways can be access controlled through the completion of controlled access projects. These projects require a public hearing process to inform all impacted parties and to solicit their input. This type of project allows WisDOT to then readily manage public and private access in the future along those segments.

Traffic Management and Neighborhood Livability

In order to increase neighborhood and community livability, congestion or the threat of congestion should not automatically dictate increased roadway capacity solutions. Capacity improvements, when and where determined necessary, should be designed to minimize negative impacts to neighborhoods.

Adding travel lanes or widening roads often have the effect of increasing traffic speeds, noise, and induced traffic that can negatively impact adjacent land uses. Therefore, strategies should be implemented that allow for efficient traffic flow while minimizing negative impacts to adjacent land uses. In addition to the strategies described above, the following techniques can help enhance neighborhood livability.

Grid Pattern Residential Street. As previously discussed, grid pattern streets are an important element in providing traffic alternatives and reducing local trips on arterial streets. Furthermore, grid pattern streets allow convenient and direct walking and biking access to destinations.

Narrow Streets. Narrow streets have been shown to reduce traffic speeds, creating quieter, safer, and more comfortable pedestrian and bike friendly neighborhoods. Narrow streets benefit developers by reducing costs and benefit the City by reducing maintenance, snow removal and reconstruction costs. Weekly alternative-side parking would allow for street cleaning and snow removal. Although narrower streets may create some challenges for emergency vehicles, extra planning efforts should be able to address those issues. Where greater demand for on-street parking is anticipated, a 30-foot road width with two-side parking may be preferable.

Emergency Vehicle Access. One of the greatest concerns in narrowing streets is that emergency vehicle access will be limited. One of the important aspects of grid pattern streets is that they provide individual property access from two directions. Alleys can provide another access point. Still, emergency response personnel should be involved in providing input as street patterns are considered. A system of minor and major emergency routes should be established throughout the community to ensure that access into neighborhoods is adequate.

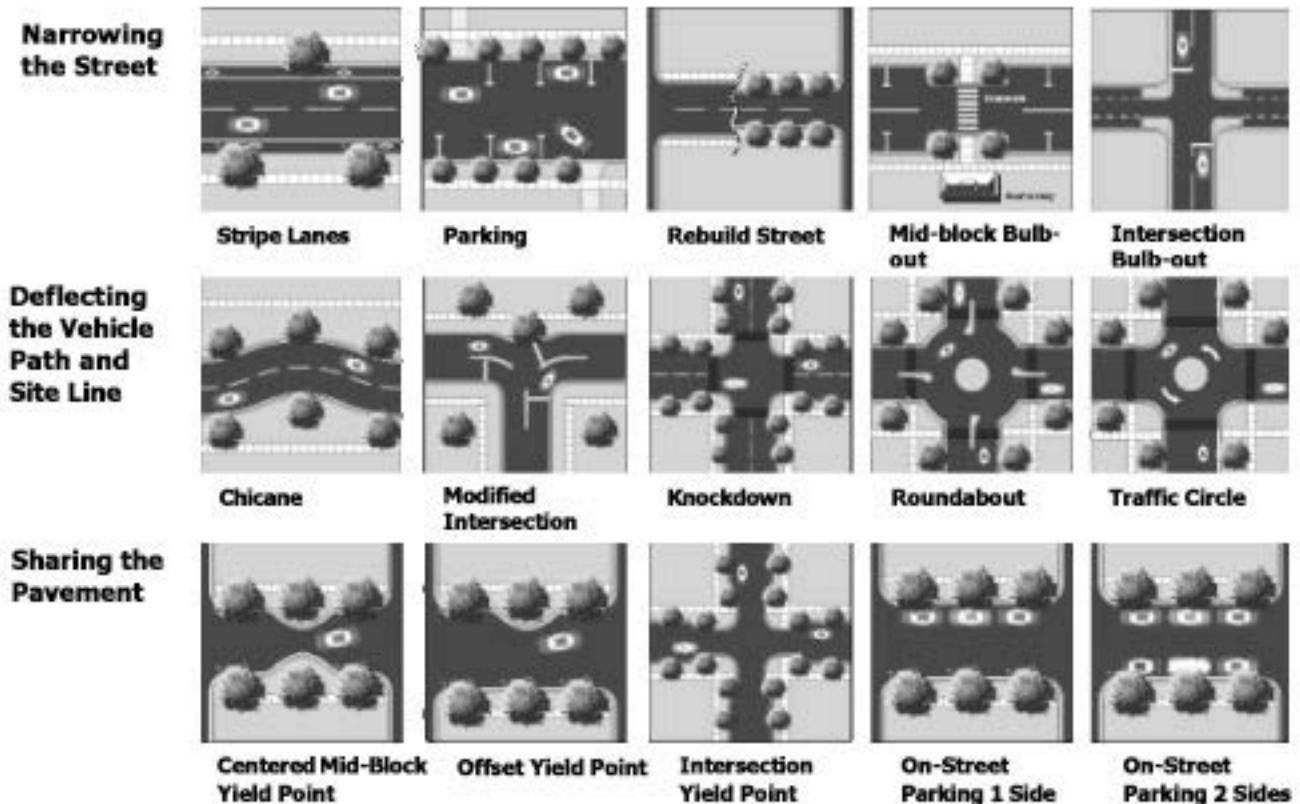
Traffic Calming. A subcommittee of the Institute of Transportation Engineer’s defines traffic calming as “the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users.” The purpose of traffic calming is to slow traffic to increase safety, particularly for the most vulnerable populations (i.e., children, seniors, and the disabled) and increase neighborhood livability. While traffic calming is generally targeted toward local residential streets, traffic calming strategies are also appropriate for busier streets in residential areas, high pedestrian activity areas, and older commercial areas where buildings and sidewalks are close to the street.

Narrowing streets can serve a valuable traffic calming function. However, in existing neighborhoods where it will be some time before streets are reconstructed, other traffic calming strategies may be useful. It may also be desirable to implement traffic calming even on narrow streets where a special need is identified, such as near schools, parks and other high pedestrian use area.

Currently, the City uses stop signs in neighborhoods as a traffic calming strategy. The benefit of this is that stop signs are easy to install or remove and are relatively inexpensive. However, other cities have found that placing stop signs where they are not warranted by traffic demand, results in an increased disregard for all stop signs. Traffic control devices, such as stop signs and speed limit signs, differ from traffic calming measures, in that they are a regulatory measure that requires enforcement. Traffic calming measures are intended to be self enforcing.

Traffic calming strategies vary dramatically in type, design, and function. In La Crosse, traffic calming strategies should focus on slowing traffic to appropriate speeds and not diverting traffic from one neighborhood street to another. Traffic calming measures that alter street width or the perception of street width is more comfortable to drivers than strategies that alter the physical road environment, such as speed humps (see Figure 5A-11).

Figure 5A-11 Traffic Calming Strategy Examples



Traffic calming programs are being implemented in many communities. Determining how to best implement traffic calming is a question that should be asked. Some programs require neighborhood petitions to initiate a study of traffic speeds. In the case of Portland, OR, a detailed process exists which requires neighborhood input and approval from initial problem identification through final implementation. This type of process is useful in pursuing traffic calming measures to problem areas in existing neighborhoods.

In new or redeveloped areas, traffic calming can be integrated within the street design. For example, traffic calming devices, such as traffic circles, raised intersections, and/or bulb-outs should be considered in addition to narrow streets with new development.

Traffic Calming devices vary considerably, and are not appropriate in all situations. People's perception and response to these strategies will also be quite different. Many people who may have a very negative response to speed bumps, may like the use of a bulb-outs or traffic circles. Whether to construct traffic calming devices, and which to use, should be thoroughly discussed with affected residents, businesses and property owners prior to installation to ensure that the device serves the appropriate function and is accepted by the neighborhood.

Pedestrian Safety. According to AASHTO, “the number of accidents increases with an increase in the number of decisions required by the driver.” A corollary to this truism is that the actual and potential effects of each driver-decision become more significant as the speed of the particular motor vehicle increases.⁴

The actual distance traveled by the vehicle as it slides to a stop after the brakes have been applied is five times more at 40 mph than at 20 mph. This is a function of physics not related to driver skill or awareness. Even from 20 mph to 30 mph braking distance required to stop is 2.5 times longer.

The risk of very serious injury to a pedestrian increases dramatically as the speed of an impacting vehicle exceeds 20 mph. The probability of fatal injury becomes likely from initial impact alone as vehicular speeds reach and exceed approximately 35 mph. The probability of receiving fatal injuries is:

- 3.5 percent at 15 mph
- 37 percent at 31 mph
- 83 percent at 44 mph.

Other research has also shown that pedestrians are usually not seriously injured when hit by a car moving at a speed of less than 20 mph at the time of impact. Between 20 and 35 mph injuries are usually serious, while at or above 35 mph they usually endanger life or are fatal. Another study found that the probability of receiving fatal injury is 15% in a 20 mph zone and 60% in a 30 mph zone.

⁴ *Traditional Neighborhood Development Street Design Guidelines*, the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), June 1997.

“Safety” is a relative term, and its accommodation in street design situations requires the consideration of many, sometimes competing elements. It is impossible to design any real-world situation that is entirely safe for all possible purposes. An unsafe condition can be created by a wide variety of means that are beyond the control of designers; those most affecting street design being human error, vehicular failure, and roadway conditions. In street design, the following questions should be asked by designers relating to safety-matters:

- What actions may reasonably be expected of motorists and non-motorists along the particular street?
- Given a particular and foreseeable but infrequent problem (i.e., a speeding vehicle) what are the ramifications to other users of the street if the particular problem is specially accounted for by the design?
- When balancing conflicting matters, the frequency of conflict between the two or more competing elements and the resultant frequency of difficulties that will be experienced should be documented and carefully considered.
- What are the physical consequences of a particular design element or decision?
- If fairly in doubt, favor the non-motorist and accommodate the motorist.

When a fair question exists concerning a particular design detail, favoring the non-motorist will usually result in the correct decision because:

- Motorists have the benefit (from a safety perspective) of travelling in a device designed to enclose, protect, and support the human(s) inside;
- An inconvenienced motor vehicle will seldom result in a modal shift, but an inconvenienced non-motorist will often become a motorist to avoid inconvenience.

Appendix B:

La Crosse North-South Transportation Corridor Study

The North-South Corridor area is currently served by three arterial streets which cross the Marsh, Copeland Avenue (USH 53), Lang Drive (STH 35) and STH 16. An MIS and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) were conducted for the La Crosse North-South Corridor in the mid-1990's. The purpose of these studies was to determine how best to meet long-range travel demand and forecasted traffic increases in the year 2020 between Interstate Highway 90 and downtown La Crosse.

The MIS and EIS looked at a range of alternatives including:

Alternative 1: No Build. The no build scenario assumed that all future traffic would be borne by the existing road network and committed improvement projects.

Alternative 2: Transportation System Management Measures. This alternative would have provided for isolated short-term operational improvements to the exiting road network mainly improving several intersections.

Alternative 3: Transportation Control Measures. This alternative would have involved reducing auto traffic demand mainly through increased bus ridership, and bicycle and pedestrian trips.

Alternative 4: Congestion Management Measures. This alternative would have focused on adding capacity to existing roadways and providing new roadway links.

Alternative 5: New North-South Roadway. This alternative would have been a combination of adding capacity to existing roadways and providing new roadway links. This alternative considered two separate roadway alignments, 5B-1 and 5B-2.

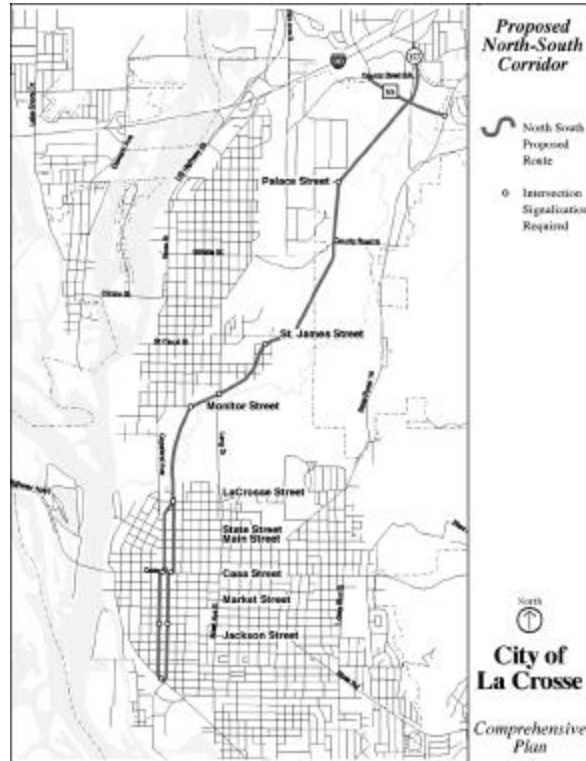
The study team, which included WISDOT, LAPC, the City of La Crosse and others, selected alternative 5B-1 as the recommended course of action to serve future transportation needs in conjunction with Transportation System Management Measures (i.e., spot intersection and roadway capacity improvements), and Transportation Control Measures (i.e., transit, bike, and pedestrian transportation). Alternative 5B-1 is depicted in Figure 5B-1 and would:

- Extend STH 157 to existing River Valley Drive near Palace Street, extend 12th Avenue from CTH SS to STH 16, and construct a new interchange between the STH 157 and 12th Avenue Extensions.

- Follow River Valley Drive between Palace Street and St. James Street.
- Follow Harvey Street Corridor between St. James Street and Monitor Street.
- Follow abandoned railroad corridor between Monitor Street and La Crosse Street.
- Follow 6th and 7th Street corridor (converted to a one-way street pair) as the connection to South Avenue.

The North-South Corridor Study MIS/EIS cited improved traffic capacity and operations, traffic safety, and the highest benefit/cost ratio due to providing the greatest accident cost savings and travel time savings as the rationale for recommending the 5B-1 alternative.

Figure 5B-1 LAPC/WISDOT Recommended North-South Corridor



Approach to the North-South Traffic Movement

The proposed approach for addressing North-South traffic movements outlined below is influenced by several factors. First, City voters rejected the financing of the 5B-1 alternative in a citywide referendum. Second, the Comprehensive Plan Survey found that of those surveyed, only 23 percent strongly agreed and 19 percent strongly disagreed that driving north and south through La Crosse is a big problem. Lastly, the Concept Plan indicates that transportation decisions should promote neighborhood revitalization and other community goals. Therefore, this plan will focus on options other than building the 5B-1 alternative.

The North-South Corridor has been a contentious transportation issue for the City of La Crosse for decades. The three routes that cross the Marsh are heavily traveled arterial streets. Current conditions are at Level of Service “D or E” and based on the findings of the Travel Demand Model are projected to worsen. While the 5B-1 alternative does address the capacity deficiency in the short-run, the long-term impacts are less certain.

The La Crosse North-South Transportation Corridor Study provided a very detailed and comprehensive analysis of the North-South Corridor options. However, the study objectives, and therefore the recommendations, focused almost entirely on transportation criteria. In contrast, Coulee Visions, the Concept Plan and the objectives identified in the Comprehensive Plan consider other community values as well transportation values.

With respect to the 5B-1 alternative, some of these other community values may be in conflict with transportation values.

The La Crosse North-South Transportation Corridor Study project objectives include:

- **Objective 1:** Provide transportation system improvements that accommodate economic growth and population increases in the La Crosse metropolitan planning area, and associated increases in travel demand.
- **Objective 2:** Provide transportation system improvements that address present and future transportation deficiencies (capacity, traffic operations, safety) on major north-south roadways in the project area such as Copeland Avenue, Lang Drive, and STH 16.
- **Objective 3:** Integrate land use and transportation planning to ensure long-term compatibility between meeting travel demand, protecting environmental resources, preserving and enhancing development (commercial and residential), and fostering planned economic development.
- **Objective 4:** Implement long-term corridor preservation to protect future transportation rights-of-way and provide system improvements that are compatible with multi-modal travel options.

The La Crosse North-South Transportation Corridor Study evaluated each of the identified alternatives separately and determined that Alternatives 1 through 3 would not meet the project's objectives. The conclusions drawn from the study's evaluation are reasonable given the defined objectives. However, given the response from the community, the study's objectives may have been too limited to transportation operation outcomes.

Assuming that the 5B-1 alternative is not constructed in the foreseeable future, the recommended approach would be to pursue alternatives 2 and 3, which include making transportation system management measures to improve operation, capacity and safety, and transportation demand management measures to decrease demand and a multi-modal approach to encourage mode shifts. In addition, land use and design decisions described under the smart growth and land use objective and within the Coulee Visions should be pursued.

Eastern Arterial/Bypass: Other roadway improvements have been considered through this process. It has been suggested that a north-south eastern arterial road be constructed. However, such a roadway would likely be either too costly to build in the Coulees, or have to be built too far away from the city to have much impact on north-south traffic. Furthermore, such a roadway may encourage more development outside the City, which is inconsistent with the Concept Plan.

George Street: It has also been suggested that George Street could be improved to accommodate more vehicles. George Street could be widened to accommodate more lanes of traffic with turning lanes. However, this area is mostly residential, and a wider road would likely attract more traffic creating a greater impact on the neighborhood, which is inconsistent with the Concept Plan.

Within the current right-of-way, parking could be removed on one or both sides of the street to allow room for a four-lane undivided roadway or for one lane in each direction with a reversible lane in the center. A reversible lane would consist of overhead signals indicating directional usage of the lane, which would correspond with peak travel patterns. As discussed on page 5-23, a four lane undivided may create safety concerns, more traffic weaving between lanes, and an increase in average speeds and speed variability. A reversible lane would create a similar situation although only for the peak traffic direction.

If left-turning movements are prevalent, adding dedicated turning lanes at cross street intersection would enhance traffic flow and capacity while maintaining slower speeds and less speed variability than a four lane undivided configuration. By adding left turning lanes at cross streets, on-street parking could be preserved. Additional traffic counts and turning movement data is needed to determine how beneficial left-turning lanes would be.

North-South Travel Movement Strategy:

- **Land Use:** The City should promote land use decisions and development designs that are multi-modal-friendly and minimize travel distance between uses.
- **Transportation System Management:** Implement strategies such as access management and advanced signal technology can improve safety, traffic flow and maximize capacity of existing infrastructure.
- **Travel Demand Management:** Implement strategies to decrease demand such as employee incentives to use transit, carpool, bike or walk.
- **Multi-modal Transportation:** Improve transit, bike and walking options.

The approach to the North-South Corridor and congestion in general, is not to try to “solve” congestion, but instead, try to manage congestion to a level that the community can live with in order to balance community values with transportation values. It is unclear as to what level of service this is.

Appendix C:

Feasibility Determination Factor of Characteristics and Sample Evaluation Criteria for Three-Lane Road Configurations

Table 5C-1: Feasibility Determination Factor of Characteristics and Sample Evaluation Criteria

Factor	Characteristics	Sample Evaluative Questions
Roadway Function and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual, expected, and desired primary function (access, mobility, or a combination of the two) • Community objectives/goals for the roadway • Available right-of-way • Current and expected adjacent land use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the primary current, expected, and desired function of the roadway? • Is the roadway primarily a collector or minor arterial roadway? • Does the current roadway primarily operate as a “defacto” three-lane cross section? • Is the goal for the roadway improvement increased safety with somewhat lower mobility? • Is the right-of-way limited? • Will the adjacent land use remain relatively stable throughout the design period? • Will the proposed cross section match the desired function of the roadway? • Will the answers to the above questions remain the same throughout the design period of the project?
Overall Traffic Volume and Level of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total daily volume • Peak-hour volume (morning/noon/evening) • Directional SPLIT • Intersection and arterial level of service • Side street and driveway vehicle delay • Volume of frequent-stop and/or slow-moving vehicles • Signal timing/phasing • Arterial travel speeds and vehicle delays • Existence of turn lanes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an acceptable increase in minor street or signal-related delay due to the conversion? • Is a decrease in arterial travel speed of 5 miles per hour or less acceptable? • What is an acceptable reduction in intersection level of service? • What level of daily traffic volume exists (assuming a 50/50 split and 10 percent of daily volume occurs during peak-hour): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> < or = 15,000 vpd (feasibility probable) 15,000 to 17,500 vpd (exercise caution) > or = 17,500 vpd (feasibility less likely) • Does the signal timing/phasing need to be changed? • Does the current roadway primarily operate as a “defacto” three-lane cross section?

Factor	Characteristics	Sample Evaluative Questions
Turning Volumes and Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and location of turn volumes and access points • Peak time period of turn volumes • Existence of left-turn and right-turn lanes • Design of access points and intersections • Turn volume of frequent-stop and/or slow-moving vehicles • Minor street and access point vehicle delays • Signal timing/phasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the signal timing/phasing need to be changed/optimized? • How important is it that right-turn vehicles quickly enter/exit the roadway? • Do the access point and intersections need to be redesigned (e.g., radii, approach slopes, location)? • Are right-turn lanes needed at particular locations? • Does the proposed marking allow the design vehicle (e.g., tractor-trailer) to turn properly? • What is an acceptable increase in minor street and/or left-turn vehicle delay? • Does the current roadway primarily operate as a “de facto” three-lane cross section?
Frequent-Stop and/or Slow-Moving Vehicles (e.g., agricultural vehicles, mail carriers, school buses, tractor-trailers, and buggies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume, location, and time of frequent-stop and/or slow-moving vehicles • Type, design (length, width, turning radius, etc.) and speed of vehicles • Arterial travel speeds and vehicle delays • Level of enforcement for proper TWLTL use (i.e., no passing allowed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is acceptable delay with respect to frequent-stop or slow-moving vehicles? • Can these vehicles turn properly at the access points and intersections? • Can no passing of these vehicles be enforced? • Are there locations for pull-outs for these vehicles? • Can some or all of the stop locations for the frequent-stop vehicles be combined?

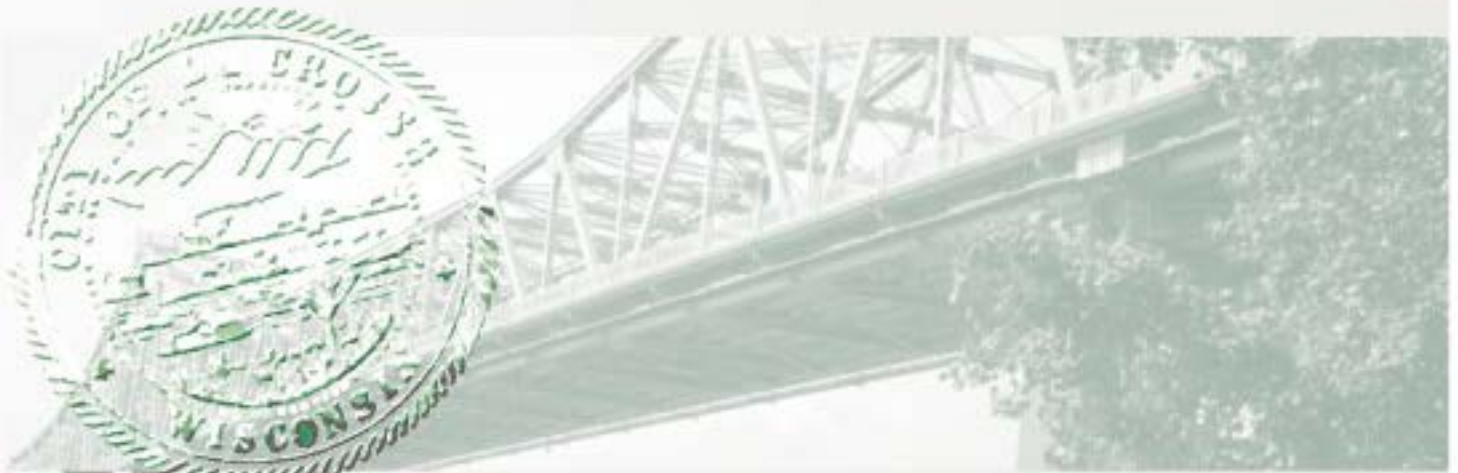
Factor	Characteristics	Sample Evaluative Questions
Weaving, Speed, and Queues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal timing/phasing • Number of existing lane changes • Turn volume and location • Arterial travel speeds and vehicle delays • Level of enforcement for proper TWLTL use (i.e., no passing allowed) • Number and location of turn volumes and access points • Peak time period of turn volumes • Existence of left-turn and right-turn lanes • Design of access points and intersections • Turn volume of frequent-stop and/or slow-moving vehicles • Minor street and access point vehicle delay • Queue length • Number of speeders (i.e., greater than 5 mph over the posted speed limit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the signal timing/phasing need to changes/optimized? • How important is it that right-turn vehicles quickly enter/exit the roadway? • Do the access point and intersections need to be redesigned (e.g., radii, approach slopes, location)? • Are right-turn lanes needed at particular locations? • What is an acceptable increase in minor street and/or left-turn vehicle delay? • Is a decrease in arterial travel speed of 5 miles per hour or less acceptable? • What is an acceptable change in queues? • Are there safety concerns related to weaving? • Can no passing be enforced? • Can drivers be educated about proper use of TWLTL? • Is a reduction in speeders and speed variability preferred? • Can all the old markings be completely removed? • Does the current roadway primarily operate as a “defacto” three-lane cross section?
Crash Types and Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of crashes • Location of crashes • Number and location of pedestrians and bicyclists • Parallel parking need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the crashes that are occurring be reduced with a conversion? • Will a reduction in speed and speed variability increase safety? • Are there safety concerns related to parallel parking maneuvers? • Do pedestrians and bicyclists have safety concerns?
Pedestrian and Bike Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and location of pedestrians • Number and location of bicyclist use • Characteristics of pedestrians and bicyclists (e.g., age) • Bike and pedestrian friendliness of roadway • Cross section width • Parallel parking need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the pedestrian and bicyclist friendliness of the roadway? • Do pedestrians and bicyclists have safety concerns? • Will the addition of a TWLTL assist pedestrians and bicyclists? • How will pedestrians and bicyclists interact with parallel parking? • Can a bike lane be added after the conversion?

Factor	Characteristics	Sample Evaluative Questions
Right-of-Way Availability, Cost, and Acquisition Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available right-of-way • Cost of right-of-way • Existence of left-turn and right-turn lanes • Design of access points and intersections • Number of properties needed and environmental impacts (e.g., tree removal) • Cross section width • Parallel parking need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the right-of-way limited? • Will the cost of right-of-way acquisition be significant? • Do the access point and intersections need to be redesigned (e.g., radii, approach slopes, location)? • Are right-turn lanes needed at particular locations? • What is necessary in the cross section (e.g., bike lane, parallel parking, etc.)?
General Characteristics		
Parallel Roadways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadway Network Layout • Volume and Characteristics of Through Vehicles Diverted • Impact of Diversion on Parallel Roadways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a decrease in arterial travel speed of 5 miles per hour or less acceptable? • Does the signal timing/phasing need to changes/optimized? • Will conversion divert through vehicles to parallel roadways? • Is it possible to avoid or reroute the diverted traffic? • What is the impact on the parallel roadway environment?
Offset Minor Street Intersections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume and time of left turns • Queue lengths • Distance between minor street approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do left turns occur into both minor street/access point approaches at a similar time? • Are the left-turn volumes significant? • Will the left-turn volumes produce queues in the through lanes of a three-lane roadway?
Parallel Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parallel parking need • Number of parking maneuvers • Operational and safety impacts of parallel parking • Design of existing/proposed parallel parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does parallel parking exist? • How many parking maneuvers occur during peak travel times? • What are the safety and delay concerns related to parallel parking maneuvers? • Is it possible to design these spaces for easy enter/exit (i.e., to minimize delay)? • Will it be necessary to reduce the number of parking spaces? • Does parallel parking reduce the ability of vehicles to turn in and out of minor streets and access points?

Factor	Characteristics	Sample Evaluative Questions
Corner Radii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of access points and intersections • Number and location of turn volumes and access points • Peak time period of turn volumes • Existence of left-turn and right-turn lanes • Turn volume of frequent-stop and/or slow-moving vehicles • Minor street and access point vehicle delay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important is it that right-turn vehicles quickly enter/exit the roadway? • Do the access point and intersections need to be redesigned (e.g., radii, approach slopes, location)? • Are right-turn lanes needed at particular locations? • Does the proposed marking allow the design vehicle (e.g., tractor-trailer) to turn properly? • Do parallel parking spaces need to be removed to allow proper turning?
At-Grade Railroad Crossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume, location, and time of train crossing • Length of crossing train • Delay impacts of train crossing • Queue impacts of train crossing • Total daily vehicle volume • Peak-hour vehicle volume (morning/noon/evening) • Directional split of vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do trains cross during peak travel periods? What is the typical delay from train crossing? • Is double the current queue length (with four-lane undivided cross section) at a railroad at-grade crossing acceptable? • Would the delay impacts of double the current queue be acceptable?

Source: *Guidelines for the Conversion of Urban Four-Lane Undivided Roadways to Three-Lane Two-Way Left Turn Lane Facilities*; Center for Transportation Research and Education, Iowa State University; April 2001.

Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

6.0 Urban Design Plan Element

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Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF URBAN DESIGN ISSUES	1
Identity – Sense of Place	1
Protect Natural Character	2
Visual Clutter	2
Inappropriate Design and Land Uses.....	2
GUIDANCE FROM THE CONCEPT PLAN	4
OVERVIEW OF THE URBAN DESIGN PLAN.....	5
SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES	5
URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	7
NATURAL ATTRIBUTES	7
IDENTITY – SENSE OF PLACE	12
ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOODS	19
NEW NEIGHBORHOODS	21
DOWNTOWN.....	23
CORRIDORS AND CONNECTIONS	25
Street Network and Design.....	25
Parkway System	27
Major Road Corridors.....	29
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM	35

List of Figures

FIGURE 6-1 NATURAL FEATURES.....	9
FIGURE 6-2 GATEWAYS.....	17
FIGURE 6-3 PARKWAY SYSTEM.....	29

List of Tables

Table 6-1: Implementation Actions for Urban Design	35
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Appendices

Appendix A Urban Design Guidelines

Urban Design Plan Element

The physical image and character of a city is derived from both its natural attributes and its built environment. Urban design is generally concerned with the quality of the built environment, in particular, its appearance and scale. In the best sense, urban design should directly relate to the intrinsic character and function of a particular community or place. La Crosse is located in an area of exceptional physical beauty dominated by the wide Mississippi River Valley and steep wooded bluffs. These features have significantly influenced the growth pattern of La Crosse and contribute substantially to its visual character.

Urban Design relates to many aspects of the City's physical form. Therefore, many aspects of the Urban Design Plan related to topics covered in other plan chapters, especially Land Use, Neighborhoods and Housing, Parks and Open Space and Transportation.

The Urban Design plan element is intended to guide public and private investments to create a more attractive community by building on existing assets and enhancing traditional character. This section will describe the unique physical image and character of La Crosse and suggest actions or approaches to maintain and enhance valued characteristics.

Summary of Urban Design Issues

The primary urban design opportunities and challenges in La Crosse relate to its physical setting and existing traditional character, having mostly developed during the first half of the 20th Century. While La Crosse contains many historically significant buildings, charming traditional neighborhoods, and a dramatic physical setting, liberal development regulation and enforcement over the past few decades have contributed to the deterioration of the City's physical appearance. Reversing those negative impacts is one of the primary challenges in improving the image and character of La Crosse.

The Issues and Conditions Report identified the key urban design issues facing La Crosse, which are summarized below:

Identity – Sense of Place

The lack of unique or clear identity was identified as a major concern. In particular, the lack of distinct gateways to signify entry into the City or to distinguish neighborhoods or districts was considered a shortcoming.

- How should the key features of La Crosse be accentuated to create a more attractive and distinctive community? Some of those features include the Mississippi River, the bluffs, and the La Crosse River and marsh.
- Is there a unified image the City wants to convey? Should major entrances be similar or somewhat unique?
- Should individual neighborhoods or districts establish distinct visual identities?

Protect Natural Character

La Crosse is located in a setting of significant natural beauty. The bluffs, rivers and the La Crosse River marsh lend a unique aesthetic character to the City as a result of their visual prominence. Care must be taken to ensure that the qualities that these resources bring to the community are not diminished or destroyed by insensitive or careless development decisions.

- How can the appearance of the City’s significant natural features (e.g., bluffs, rivers, marsh) be protected from development impacts?
- What is the appropriate balance between protection of natural features and providing access (visual and/or physical) to them?
- How much control should the City have to limit private development in order to protect significant natural resources?

Visual Clutter

This is primarily associated with development along major roadway corridors that is characterized by excessive signage, inconsistent building design, poor screening and insufficient landscaping.

- How can the City improve its physical appearance, particularly along major commercial corridors that extend through the community?
- How much should the City control the variety and number of signs, utility poles, outdoor storage, and parking lots along major road corridors in order to improve the attractiveness of La Crosse?

Inappropriate Design and Land Uses

Insensitive building design and incompatible land uses detract from the character and appearance of the community and its neighborhoods.

- How can development and redevelopment enhance the appearance of established neighborhoods?
- To what extent would the community support use of design guidelines to improve the appearance of neighborhoods?
- Should certain areas of La Crosse become more urban, dense and mixed?
- What should be done to protect the quality of the three historic districts and historically significant buildings in La Crosse?



Insensitive building design detracts from the character of neighborhoods



Excessive signage, insufficient landscaping, and overhead utility lines contribute to visual clutter on major roadways.

Guidance from the Concept Plan

The Concept Plan for *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan* stresses the importance of building on the strengths inherent to La Crosse and its neighborhoods through an emphasis on neighborhood revitalization. The Concept Plan provides this direction regarding urban design:

- **Improve Appearance:** A major emphasis should be placed on improving the appearance of the built environment. The appearance of existing and new buildings should be improved by applying design standards and guidelines. The appearance of streetscapes should be improved by providing attractive amenities and removal of extraneous signage and utility structures. New subdivisions and rebuilt streets should include buried utilities, street trees, and other landscaping. Auto-oriented commercial development should be designed to be more attractive through good site planning, landscaping and sign design.
- **Urban Character:** Focus redevelopment efforts on increasing the density and mixture of land uses in selected appropriate locations, particularly in areas centered around major institutions or along major road corridors.
- **Pedestrian-Oriented Design:** There should be a strong pedestrian emphasis in neighborhoods. Neighborhood design should incorporate sidewalks, street trees, narrow streets, modest front setbacks, interconnected streets, nearby shops and convenient access to transit.
- **Downtown:** Downtown La Crosse should continue to be the priority focus of revitalization efforts with a strong emphasis on historic preservation. Downtown should continue to function as the regional center for office, government, and entertainment.
- **Riverfront:** Riverfront land use should focus on river-dependent industries, parks, housing and offices. There should be an emphasis on creating more parks and open space along the river. Existing riverfront parks should be linked and extended to the north and south. Open space connections should be included in riverfront redevelopment projects.
- **Parks and Natural Features:** Parks and natural features should be used to make neighborhoods more attractive and sustainable. Parks should be extended into developed areas through neighborhood “greening” efforts and stronger park connections. Natural features should be incorporated into the design of new development and redevelopment projects.
- **Major Institutions:** Expansion of major institutions in La Crosse should be done in a manner that minimizes negative impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. The design and location of new institutional buildings and parking facilities must be sensitive to the scale and character of surrounding neighborhoods.

Overview of the Urban Design Plan

The La Crosse Urban Design plan element establishes a framework to create attractive, distinctive neighborhoods that are supported by a connected network of landscaped, tree-lined streets and parks and attractive commercial and civic districts. The actions that follow direct the City to take advantage of its major natural attributes, such as the Mississippi River, the La Crosse River and marsh, and the bluffs. The traditional character and ambience of established neighborhoods should be retained and embraced as one of the City's primary assets. Downtown should become more urban, dense, and walkable, with clear connections to the riverfront and surrounding neighborhoods. New neighborhoods should be designed comprehensively and relate sensitively to their surroundings, whether in an urban, rural, or natural setting. Together, the system of parks, trails, and streets should form an integrated network of green connections oriented to the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists while calming traffic speeds and beautifying the City.

Summary of Objectives

The urban design objectives are summarized below:

Objective 1: Accentuate Natural Features. Protect and enhance the quality of the significant natural features of La Crosse in order to strengthen the City's visual character and establish a contextual sense of place.

Objective 2: Enhance Riverfront. Explore opportunities to enhance the appearance, ecology, and access to the riverfront through creation of more parks, trails and open space and careful site and building design.

Objective 3: Strengthen Identity. Accentuate the sense that La Crosse is composed of a variety of identifiable neighborhoods to foster a sense of place that distinguishes La Crosse from surrounding areas.

Objective 4: Maintain Traditional Neighborhood Character. Support and foster public and private efforts to improve established neighborhoods in a manner that respects their traditional character and keeps them attractive, safe and comfortable places to live.

Objective 5: Self Sufficient New Neighborhoods. Build new neighborhoods that foster a sense of community and interaction among neighbors, provide a sense of identity and belonging, and create a sense of comfort and security.

Objective 6: Downtown Revitalization. Support implementation of the City's economic and social goals for downtown as expressed in the City Vision 2000 Master Plan.

Objective 7: Pedestrian-Friendly Street Network. Design streets to form or extend an interconnected network that establishes a clear hierarchy of streets, emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle access and creates pleasant and comfortable outdoor spaces.

Objective 8: Parkway System. Build an interconnected parkway system to help improve community appearances, property values and quality of life.

Objective 9: Major Corridor Appearance. Improve the appearance of major road corridors to establish a positive image of La Crosse.



Building on the City's assets, such as traditional neighborhoods and a beautiful natural setting, is a primary goal of this plan's neighborhood revitalization focus.



Mississippi River at Riverside Park looking up river.

Urban Design Objectives and Actions

This section describes what the City wants to accomplish and specific actions that can be taken to achieve those objectives. The objectives and actions of this chapter provide guidance relative to City ordinances and development controls, spending and public infrastructure design, especially streets and parks.

Natural Attributes

The significant natural features of La Crosse contribute greatly to its character and image. The primary features include the bluffs, the Mississippi River and the La Crosse River and marsh. Maintaining physical and visual access to these features and resources is important in establishing a contextual sense of place in La Crosse. It is also important to protect the quality and appearance of these features from development impacts or other actions that would result in their fragmentation or diminish their intrinsic character. Figure 6-1 illustrates the key natural features that should be accentuated.

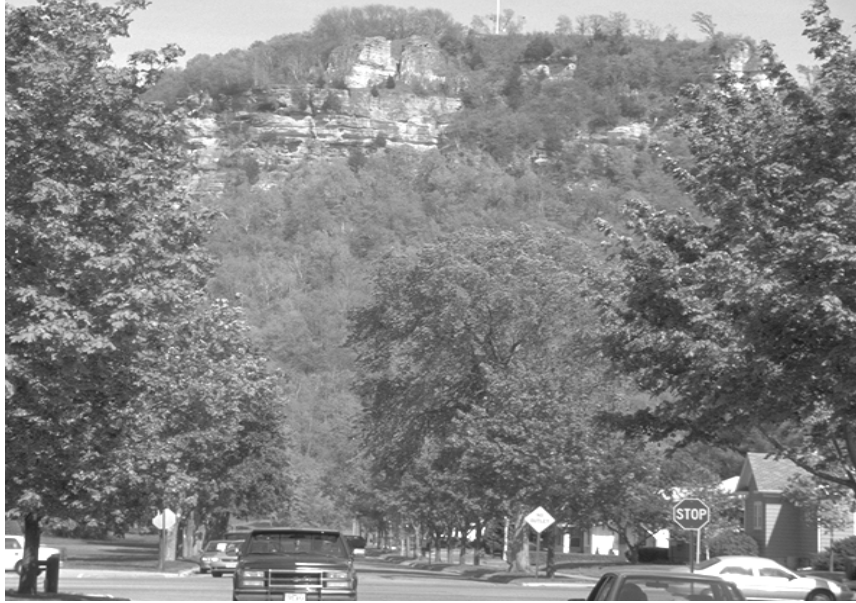
Objective 1: Accentuate Natural Features. Protect and enhance the quality of the significant natural features of La Crosse in order to strengthen the City's visual character and establish a contextual sense of place.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Development Controls.** The City shall develop and enforce development controls, including best management practices (BMPs), to minimize development impacts on steep slopes, woodlands, wetlands, rivers and creeks. Setbacks should be established to minimize visual impacts of development on bluffs and along the edge of rivers and the Marsh. The City will need to coordinate enforcement of development controls with adjacent townships and La Crosse County. Appendix A describes common BMPs.
2. **Property Purchase and Easements.** The City shall continue to explore opportunities to acquire land or public easements to protect natural areas from private development and preserve it for public open space purposes. This may involve entering into partnerships with other organizations, such as the Mississippi Valley Conservancy who is working with the City to acquire bluff land.
3. **Protect Key View-sheds.** The City shall identify key view-sheds that merit protection and establish guidelines to protect these views from obstructions. View-sheds that merit protection include:
 - The La Crosse River marsh from Highway 16 and Lang Drive;
 - Granddad's Bluff from major east-west streets;
 - Bluffs at intersection of 14/61 and Highway 35 (looking north)
 - Mississippi River from several downtown streets.

Care should be taken in siting buildings, landscaping and other structures within these view-sheds so they do not obscure views of the resource. Similarly, the design of public facilities, such as bridges, and the siting of utility lines and towers should, to the extent possible, accentuate and not obstruct important views.

- 4. Natural Feature Markers.** Where appropriate, the City shall establish a system of signs and markers to identify key natural features. For example, all bridges should include signs that identify the water body being crossed. Identification of natural features could be an extension of a wayfinding signage system (see page 6-13).

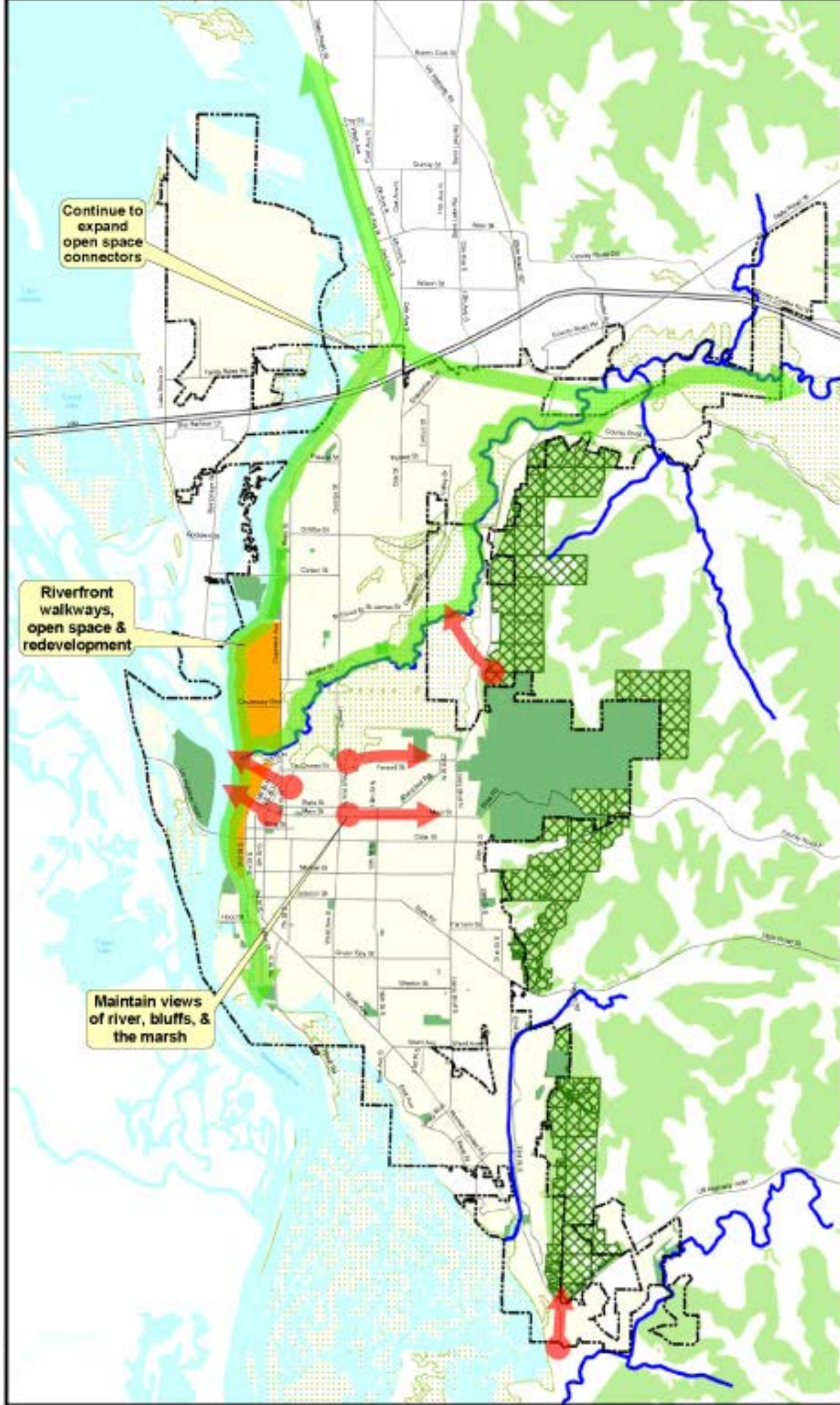


Prominent bluffs, rivers, creeks and wetlands contribute to the visual character and image of La Crosse (Above: Granddads Bluff Below: the La Crosse River)

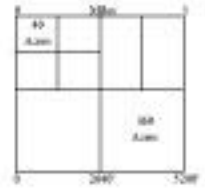


Figure 6-1

Natural Features



-  Municipal Boundary
-  Street
-  City of La Crosse
-  Water
-  Wetland Complex
-  Critical Rivers and Streams
-  LaCrosse Parks
-  Bluff Protection Area
-  Critical Slopes and Woodlands
-  Riverfront Development
-  Open Space Connectors
-  Key View



**City of
La Crosse
Comprehensive
Plan**

Objective 2: Enhance Riverfront. Explore opportunities to enhance the appearance, ecology, and access to the riverfront through creation of more parks, trails and open space and careful site and building design.

The Mississippi riverfront is the birthplace and symbolic front door of La Crosse. In recent years the City has made substantial improvements to public open space along the downtown riverfront. Concurrently, significant private investments have been made in new riverfront residential, office, and commercial developments. While the riverfront continues to support industry, long-term shifts in the economy have created opportunities to redevelop large areas of under-utilized industrial land adjacent to the riverfront. As riverfront redevelopment occurs, it is important to continue to accommodate river-dependent industries, but to also seize opportunities to create more public parks and open space, housing and offices that will enhance, and be enhanced by their location along the riverfront.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update.** The City shall continue to implement the *City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update*. In 1999 the Common Council approved an update to the *City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update* for the La Crosse Historic Central Business District. This plan establishes a strategy to stimulate reinvestment in the downtown area and strengthen connections to the historic riverfront setting and surrounding neighborhoods.
- 2. Site and Building Design.** Through its development review and building permit review process, the City will ensure that development located on the riverfront is designed to fit into and enhance its riverfront location. At a minimum, site and building design should follow the general standards described in Appendix A under Low Impact Development and Conservation Design.
- 3. Public Open Space Connections.** The City shall continue to explore opportunities to acquire additional land or easements to develop a connected system of public trails, walkways and open space along the edge of the Mississippi, Black, and La Crosse rivers.

Property and easement acquisition could occur in conjunction with review and approval of development proposals. In situations involving property subdivision or replatting, land for trails and open space connections could be acquired as park dedication in conjunction with property development. Park dedication may be a particularly effective tool relative to the pending redevelopment of large industrial properties along the riverfront. In some cases the City will need to directly approach the property owner with a purchase offer. The City should also continue to explore other incentives it can offer private property owners in exchange for allowing public access to their riverfront property.

Potential open space connections are illustrated on Figure 6-1 and are also described in the Parks and Open Space plan element.

4. **Bridges.** Through its construction review and permitting process, the City will encourage new bridge designs that reflect their visual importance and context. Because bridges are highly visible and dramatic public improvements, it is important to pay careful attention to materials, lighting, form and scale to ensure that bridges are designed in a manner that is sensitive and appropriate to their location and function.



The Cass Street Bridge - a prominent visual landmark and City gateway

Identity – Sense of Place

The dramatic and beautiful physical geography of La Crosse evokes a strong and memorable sense of place. The City's identity is also embodied in its well-preserved historic downtown, numerous majestic homes, and well-kept neighborhoods. By accentuating and enhancing these assets, the City can strengthen its identity – as a City overall, and within its distinct neighborhoods.

Objective 3: Strengthen Identity. Accentuate the sense that La Crosse is composed of a variety of identifiable neighborhoods to foster a sense of place that distinguishes La Crosse from surrounding areas.

Identity and sense of place can be strengthened by accentuating the distinct characteristics of neighborhoods and landmarks, establishing gateways and unifying themes to demarcate major entrances, boundaries, and districts, and fostering knowledge of the history of the City and its neighborhoods.

Landmarks. Local landmarks and community facilities such as schools, churches, neighborhood parks, plazas and public art help people orient themselves, provide identity,

and lend beauty and visual interest to a neighborhood. Neighborhood landmarks might also consist of small shops that cater to neighborhood or specific market needs and become destinations for daily activities, such as a coffee shop, bakery, hardware store, or bar. Such businesses are most successful as neighborhood landmarks if they establish a loyal (predominately local) clientele, provide outdoor spaces for people watching and socializing along the street, and are designed for easy access by foot or bicycle.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Historic Properties.** The City shall continue to support the efforts of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to maintain and enhance historic properties and educate the public about the value of historic preservation as a tool for economic development and neighborhood stabilization. See the Heritage Preservation plan element for additional policies and strategies in this regard.
2. **Increase Awareness.** The City shall continue to work with the HPC, neighborhood groups, and others to develop and disseminate information relative to local landmarks and places of interest. Some tools that can help increase awareness of landmarks and neighborhoods include: plaques and markers, banners, and informational brochures.
3. **Focal Features.** The City shall support the creation of focal features and public art in appropriate locations. Focal elements may be created privately or as part of the public infrastructure. It may be necessary to allow flexibility in site and building design to accommodate focal features. However, the City may need to establish some general guidelines to ensure that such features do not detract from neighborhood character or become a safety concern.



Public art becomes a focal feature in a City park.

Gateways and Entry Features. Establishing special entry or gateway features at key entrances to La Crosse, neighborhoods and special districts can create a sense of arrival and identity. Gateway features function to welcome visitors, make a positive first impression and define community or neighborhood edges. Gateway features might consist of signage, sculpture, or distinctive landscape treatments. In order for gateways to be effective, they should be appropriately sized, attractive and well maintained. Generally, gateway design and materials should reflect the significant features of La Crosse or a specific neighborhood, convey a fitting theme or image, and be affordable to maintain.

Policies/Actions:

1. City Gateways. Major entries into the City shall be designed with attractive gateway features, including monument signs, public art, and distinctive landscaping.

Opportunities for city gateways are shown on Figure 6-2 and include:

- Highway 53 just south of I-90
- Highway 14/61 at the west channel bridge
- Junction of Highway 35 and Highway 14/61 on the south end of town
- Highway 33 at 32nd Street
- Highway 16 at Losey Boulevard/La Crosse Street
- Bliss Road at 29th Street (or Alpine Inn)

The City shall coordinate with state and federal highway departments to implement the City’s gateway beautification plans.

2. Neighborhood and District Gateways. Neighborhood gateways and entry features are appropriate where the boundaries or entrance to a neighborhood are clearly defined.

The City shall work with neighborhood groups and private developers to identify appropriate locations for neighborhood entry features. Some potential district or neighborhood gateway locations are shown on Figure 6-2 and include:

- Downtown – Central Business District
- Historic Districts
- UW-La Crosse campus area
- Viterbo/Franciscan Skemp campus area

Wayfinding and Unifying Themes. Establishing a wayfinding system of signs and unified design themes can help orient visitors and residents and define the boundaries and extent of a neighborhood or district, evoking a unique character. Wayfinding systems consist of a coordinated system of informational and directional signs. Unifying themes can be created through the use of consistent streetscape elements, such as banners, distinctive light fixtures and landscaping, or through similarity in building design, scale or materials.

As with gateways, wayfinding signage and unifying themes should reflect unique characteristics of a neighborhood or district. However, care must be taken to coordinate district-scale wayfinding systems with citywide systems. The goal is to establish a clear and easily identifiable system of informational signs. Redundant or poorly coordinated wayfinding systems can create confusion, thus defeating their purpose.



Directional signs to major attractions

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Wayfinding Signage System.** The City shall continue to implement, improve upon, and expand as appropriate the wayfinding approach and design guidelines developed as part of the City Vision 2000 Master Plan. This approach, which consists of a coordinated system of signs, graphics, and logos, identifies major parks, educational and health care campuses, and other attractions, and directs visitors to downtown from the City limits. Some general design guidelines for developing a city-wide wayfinding system are described under the Street Design Guidelines in Appendix A.
- 2. Public Improvements.** Through its capital improvement programming, the City shall develop a program to install streetscape elements such as ornamental light fixtures, benches, banners, special pavement treatments, boulevard trees and plantings in conjunction with street reconstruction or other public improvements in select locations. Implementation priority should be given to public improvements in designated historic districts, areas included in adopted neighborhood plans, and other key activity centers.

The specific style and type of streetscape elements should be determined in collaboration with affected property owners and neighborhood groups. However, the City should establish a limited pallet of materials in order to achieve some design consistency between neighborhoods and throughout the City.

Community Events and Celebrations. Cultural and social events are a great way to invite people to explore and broaden their understanding of specific neighborhoods or the City in general. For example, Oktoberfest, Riverfest, and riverboat landings are events that attract people from around the region to downtown La Crosse. Similarly, certain neighborhoods or even schools or churches may host annual or regular community events that provide an opportunity for people to learn more about certain neighborhoods or local institutions.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Public Support and Participation.** The City shall cooperate in allowing use of public spaces for community events by establishing a convenient and user-friendly process for obtaining necessary permits and approvals to conduct community events and allow temporary street closures.
- 2. Public Protection.** The City shall continue to provide public protection during community events held on public property.
- 3. Promotion.** The City shall create a means to advertise community events on the City's web site.










Banner for Cameron Park Community Market

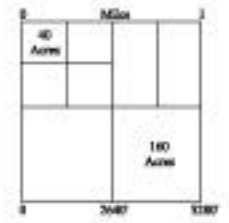


Vendors at Cameron Park Community Market

Figure 6-2

Gateways

-  Municipal Boundary
-  City of La Crosse
-  Water
-  Railroads
-  Roads
-  City Gateways
-  District Gateways



**City of
La Crosse
Comprehensive
Plan**

Established Neighborhoods

La Crosse is a fully developed community bound by physical and jurisdictional barriers that limit its expansion. Capturing future growth will depend on the City's ability to build on its existing strengths and investments. The City's historic fabric, characterized by a close-knit, compact mixture of housing, shops, offices, services and employment, provides a sense of place and a physical environment that is difficult to reproduce. It is this traditional urban character that, if properly maintained and fostered, will keep La Crosse a vital and attractive place to live and work.

Over the past few decades there has been very little regulatory control of development in La Crosse. Consequently, many older neighborhoods contain uses or buildings that do not fit well with the traditional character of the surrounding neighborhood. This situation was exacerbated by the demand for low-cost housing for a large transient – primarily student – population. To meet that demand, many older homes were converted to multi-unit rental properties or torn down and replaced with lower-quality multi-unit dwellings. In response, neighborhood interest in establishing stronger development controls has grown – particularly in regard to establishing design standards to ensure new construction and rehabilitation of existing structures is done in a manner that respects traditional neighborhood character.

The City does not currently have a formal design review process or adopted design standards to apply when reviewing building permit applications. However, the City is currently in the process of drafting a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that combines zoning and subdivision regulations with development design standards. This plan recommends that the UDO define a design review process and include design standards consistent with the guidelines described in Appendix A.

Objective 4: Maintain Traditional Neighborhood Character. Support and foster public and private efforts to improve established neighborhoods in a manner that respects their traditional character and keeps them attractive, safe and comfortable places to live.

La Crosse contains many established neighborhoods that possess traditional character and charm. Common characteristics include traditional and historic architecture, tree-lined streets, mixed uses including nodes of neighborhood oriented commercial and services, and the presence of nearby public facilities and institutions, such as schools, fire stations, libraries, churches, and parks. This traditional character is an asset that distinguishes established La Crosse neighborhoods from newer neighborhoods. Maintaining and fostering that character will require careful design of new and infill development, sensitive rehabilitation of existing buildings, diligent attention to needed infrastructure improvements, and sufficient and timely property maintenance.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Design Standards.** The City shall incorporate the principles and guidelines contained in Appendix A into the Unified Development Ordinance. These standards shall be used to evaluate the design of new buildings and major building renovations and will be enforced through the City’s development review and building permit approval process.
2. **New Buildings.** Through the enforcement of adopted design standards, the City shall require new buildings, whether a single, infill structure, or a larger block-sized development, to be designed to respect the established or traditional characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood in terms of scale, materials, and orientation to the street.



New infill housing in a traditional neighborhood

3. **Building Rehabilitation.** Through the enforcement of adopted design standards, the City shall require that exterior improvements to existing buildings relate to the original building design, to the extent feasible.
4. **Historic Properties.** The City shall continue to require that improvements to properties formally designated as landmarks at the local or national level follow the design guidelines and standards adopted by the City and/or the Secretary of the Interior Design Standards. The City shall continue to utilize the Historic Preservation Commission to review proposed alterations on such properties and make their recommendations binding.
5. **Neighborhood Conservation Districts.** The City shall consider the use of “neighborhood conservation districts” as a tool to protect older neighborhoods that are not designated historic districts, but could benefit from an additional level of development review and scrutiny. A conservation district (and corresponding guidelines or ordinance) generally provides for design review of new construction and major alterations, but without the detailed level of review common in historic districts. Depending on the extent of a project, design review may be conducted by the planning staff or the Plan Commission and/or the HPC, or by a separate Design Review Board.

Once a conservation district is established, guidelines should be adopted, specific to the district, to ensure that new construction is sensitive to its context, in terms of height, setbacks, scale and massing, roof shape, proportion and rhythms of doors and windows, and other key elements of building and site design. These guidelines would be in addition to any other applicable regulations in the Unified Development Ordinance.

- 6. Attached Housing Design.** The City shall require design review of all new attached housing developments. New attached housing development shall comply with the design guidelines listed in Appendix A.
- 7. Mixed Use and Commercial Areas.** The City shall establish zoning districts and standards in its Unified Development Ordinance to provide for mixed use development in a variety of locations and scales in order to create more vital and walkable activity centers.
- 8. Parking.** Through its development review process, the City shall require that off-street parking in traditional neighborhoods be provided in a manner that does not interfere with pedestrian movement or drastically alter the character of traditional neighborhood commercial nodes.
- 9. Street Design.** The City shall require that new or reconstructed local streets in older neighborhoods maintain the traditional grid street pattern with sidewalks and street trees on both sides, and on-street parking.

New Neighborhoods

While most new neighborhoods will be created on the City's fringe, opportunities will arise to create new infill neighborhoods in established areas of the City through larger area (i.e., whole block) redevelopment. New neighborhoods, particularly in fringe areas, are commonly developed as entire subdivisions. Thus, the opportunity exists to design them comprehensively and appropriately integrate and connect them with the surrounding area.

Objective 5: Self-sufficient New Neighborhoods. Build new neighborhoods that foster a sense of community and interaction among neighbors, provide a sense of identity and belonging, and create a sense of comfort and security.

New neighborhoods should emulate the desirable qualities of traditional neighborhoods. They should be designed to be functionally self-sufficient by providing a variety of housing options and convenient access to neighborhood commercial areas, services, parks, and other public facilities. New neighborhoods should also be connected physically and visually to their surroundings, whether existing urban neighborhoods or more natural or rural settings on the City's fringe.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Flexible Site Design.** The City shall amend its zoning code, as necessary, to allow flexible development techniques such as Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND), rural clustered housing, open space subdivisions, and other innovative design concepts. The City shall also encourage surrounding townships to utilize flexible development techniques, where appropriate, to protect environmental or agricultural resources and foster cost efficient urban services.
2. **Housing Design.** The City shall amend its zoning code to ensure that regulations allow a variety of housing, including traditional and neo-traditional, and contemporary designs and encourage innovative site plans that combine various residential densities, and where appropriate, neighborhood-oriented office, service and retail land uses.



New neighborhood development incorporating elements of traditional neighborhood and housing design

3. **Open Space.** The City shall encourage the preservation of open space through the use of incentives and flexible regulations, such as land trusts, open space zoning, density bonuses, transfer of development rights, and conservation easements.
4. **Environmental Protection.** The City shall require use of BMPs to protect natural features, such as woodlands, slopes, and streams from development impacts (see Appendix A). In conjunction with subdivision review, the City shall explore opportunities to acquire key undeveloped parcels to maintain connected open space corridors to foster wildlife movement and minimize habitat fragmentation.
5. **Efficiency.** Through its development review process, the City shall encourage sharing of functional site design elements (such as shared access and parking, coordinated landscaping, linked open space, coordinated detention and retention areas, etc.) when such elements support a more compact, efficient, attractive, and environmentally-sensitive development pattern.

6. **Connected Local Streets.** Through its subdivision review process, the City shall encourage creation of interconnected residential street patterns. All new residential subdivisions should provide public street access in each cardinal direction, unless impractical because of natural, environmental or other constraints. Where roads will be extended in the future, developers should be required to install stub streets to the edge of their plats.
7. **Bicycle and Pedestrian Systems.** Through its subdivision and development review process, the City shall encourage creation of networks of sidewalks and bicycle paths that provide connections among individual subdivisions, commercial sites, parks, schools and other key destinations.
8. **Utility Lines.** The City shall require that utility lines in new subdivisions be buried either along the house side of a sidewalk, within an easement along the street, or within a shared utility easement along rear lot lines.

Downtown

Downtown is the economic, civic and entertainment heart of La Crosse and, therefore, deserves a high level of design attention. The City and the Downtown stakeholders understand this and have made significant investments in buildings, streetscape, and riverfront improvements and planning.

Objective 6: Downtown Revitalization. Support implementation of the City's economic and social goals for downtown as expressed in the *City Vision 2000 Master Plan*.

The central concept of the *City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update* was to build on existing strengths to increase tax base, strengthen connections to the Mississippi and La Crosse Rivers and reinforce linkages between downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods. As the historic heart of the community, it is also essential that the future of downtown is linked with its historic past.

Policies/Actions:

1. **City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update.** The City will continue to support and implement the policies and design guidelines in the *City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update*, the Downtown La Crosse Design Guidelines, and Historic Downtown La Crosse Wayfinding and Streetscape Guidelines.

Key recommendations of the *City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update* include:

- **Connections to Neighborhoods and the Riverfront:** Maintain and seek opportunities to enhance public sidewalks and pathways connecting the downtown central business district to surrounding residential neighborhoods and the riverfront.

Use coordinated streetscape elements (light fixtures, pavement, etc.) to visually enhance these connections.

- **Downtown Wayfinding and Entrance Features:** Design and install a system of coordinated signs around the City and the Downtown to help people find their way to Downtown, identify key Downtown sites, instill a sense of arrival and build Downtown identity. This should also include special design treatment or features at key Downtown entrances, including the Cass Street bridge and the Copeland Avenue bridge (La Crosse River).
- **Design Guidelines and Historic Properties:** Develop and adopt design standards to enhance the historic character and marketability of La Crosse’s historic downtown and riverfront area.
- **Streetscape Improvements:** Include theme lighting, banners, furnishings, street trees and landscaping and special pavement treatments.
- **Transit Center and Trolley System:** Actively pursue development of a Transit Center that will provide a transit hub for local residents and commuters and a terminus for a downtown trolley system.
- **Parking:** Accommodate parking demand through a combination of expanding existing parking facilities, developing new parking facilities, and coordinated sharing of parking facilities. Improve the appearance of surface parking lots with landscaping, decorative fences and low masonry walls.
- **Redevelopment Sites:** Initiate a formal redevelopment process based on the recommendations of the Downtown La Crosse Business and Developer Recruitment Plan.
- **Special Events:** Expand year-round special events, programs and activities. Create additional spaces for special events and analyze alternative sites for the farmers’ market.



Decorative lighting, banners, trees, and colored pavement enhance the streetscape

Corridors and Connections

Transportation corridors establish the physical framework for development and movement patterns in a community. Many of our perceptions of a community are shaped by what we see when traveling through it. The physical quality and visual character of the roadway, adjacent development and structures along the roadway edge all affect our image of the community.

Key challenges will involve making the street system more attractive and friendly for pedestrians and bicyclists, maintaining and enhancing a clear hierarchy of streets to facilitate connections and traffic flow, and improving the appearance of major commercial corridors that traverse La Crosse.

Street Network and Design

The street system is a fundamental element of urban design. The street pattern controls traffic flow, influences development patterns, determines the ease of pedestrian and bicyclist movements, defines views and vistas, orients the user, unites the community, and creates a physical framework into which houses and other buildings are placed.

Objective 7: Pedestrian-Friendly Street Network. Design streets to form or extend an interconnected network that establishes a clear hierarchy of streets, emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle access and creates pleasant and comfortable outdoor spaces.

To encourage walking and bicycling as alternative means of transportation, sidewalks and bicycle paths must form an interconnected network and provide logical, direct routes to key destinations. Sidewalks and bicycle paths should link neighborhoods to one another and overcome obstacles such as major roads, streams and railroad tracks.

Pedestrian-Friendly Enhancements

Streets can be designed with “enhancements”, such as sidewalks and lighting that make them more pedestrian-friendly and attractive. These enhancements should apply to all streets, from local residential streets to highly traveled arterials. The most fundamental enhancements are sidewalks and bicycle paths. Sidewalks are an essential element for circulation and they provide opportunities for socializing, playing and exploring a neighborhood on foot. Like sidewalks, off-road bicycle paths and lanes striped along the street edge provide links within and between neighborhoods. Design guidelines for pedestrian-friendly street enhancements are outlined in Appendix A.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Sidewalks.** In conjunction with street reconstruction the City shall require installation of sidewalks on at least one side of every local public street. Collector and arterial streets should have sidewalks on both sides.

2. **Bicyclist Network.** The City shall require development of connected networks of bicycle paths in new subdivisions and shall continue to seek opportunities to create new bicycle facilities (on and off-road) in conjunction with street reconstruction and redevelopment efforts in established neighborhoods.

Opportunities for bike lanes, paths, and greenways are discussed in greater detail in the Transportation and Parks plan elements.

3. **Street Trees and Landscaping.** The City shall provide for systematic street tree planting, replacement, and maintenance in its capital improvements program and annual budget. Such a program would reflect the guidelines described in Appendix A.



Street trees add to the charm and appeal of neighborhoods

4. **Street Lighting.** The City shall provide for systematic installation, replacement and maintenance of street lighting in its capital improvements program and annual budget. Such a program would reflect the guidelines described in Appendix A.
5. **Traffic Calming.** The City shall incorporate traffic-calming techniques in select locations to discourage cut-through traffic, especially commercial traffic, and/or to slow traffic speeds. Traffic-calming techniques, such as corner bump-outs, textured cross walk pavement or striping may be warranted in locations with high amounts of pedestrian traffic such as, intersections in traditional commercial areas, around public schools, parks and other public facilities. A more complete list and description of these techniques is presented in the Transportation plan element.

Functional Hierarchy

Much of La Crosse is laid out in a traditional grid pattern running parallel to both the Mississippi River and the bluff line. The network consists of a hierarchy of streets designed to carry various volumes and speeds of traffic, depending on their primary function. The

primary function of local, or residential streets, is to provide access to homes and neighborhood-oriented business and services. On the other hand, arterial roads function to move large volumes of traffic through the City and to provide access to high-activity areas.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Interconnected Local Streets.** The City shall require new residential subdivision to provide public street access in each cardinal direction unless impractical because of natural, environmental or similar conditions. New local streets should be built relatively narrow to encourage slow traffic speeds that enhance safety and enjoyment of pedestrians and bicyclists.

The two predominant local or residential street network patterns are the historic grid and the contemporary subdivision characterized by curving streets and cul-de-sacs that discourage through movement. The grid pattern allows unlimited choices for travel through neighborhoods, and distributes traffic in multiple directions, thus helping to reduce congestion on the collector and arterial roadway network. Curvilinear subdivisions typically limit the number of entry and exit points to a neighborhood, thereby concentrating traffic in a few locations. While this results in some streets having very little traffic, it forces traffic onto fewer, generally larger, roads.

- 2. Collector Streets.** The City shall require collector streets to be planned for future neighborhoods at the “sketch plan” phase. Collector streets should link neighborhoods to arterial roads and other collector roads. The City shall continue to work with developers to plan the general alignment of collector streets beyond the limits of smaller subdivisions to ensure neighborhood-wide continuity.
- 3. Arterial Roads.** The City shall adopt an “official map” of the planned road system to reserve public right-of-way for proposed future arterial roads within its jurisdiction. The City shall work cooperatively with La Crosse County and Townships to coordinate and reserve sufficient public right-of-way for future arterial roads.

Parkway System

La Crosse has an opportunity to begin to create a citywide network of landscaped, attractive streets that will bring value and enjoyment to the community for years to come. A parkway system could establish “green fingers” to connect and visually accentuate the significant natural features of La Crosse. It would also help establish a system of connected parks originally envisioned by John Nolen in his 1911 plan for the City’s park system. A continuous parkway system would also improve the attractiveness and image of the City, making it a more desirable place to live, visit, and do business.

The purpose and benefits of the parkway system are to:

- Improve the overall appearance, identity and quality of life of the community
- Increase and sustain property values

- Create bicyclist and pedestrian links among the neighborhoods, districts, greenways and parks
- Provide a ceremonial approach to important locations such as downtown, the riverfront, and major institutions



Tree-lined parkways soften and enhance a City's appearance

Objective 8: Parkway System. Build an interconnected parkway system to help improve community appearance, property values and quality of life.








Some of the greatest challenges in building – or reclaiming – a parkway system in an older, developed city are the presence of existing buildings and established right-of-way widths and traffic patterns. Because parkways usually include landscaped boulevards and/or medians, they may need a wider public right-of-way than other streets. As a result, converting an existing street into a parkway may involve removal of existing buildings or traffic lanes in order to make room for wider boulevards or medians.

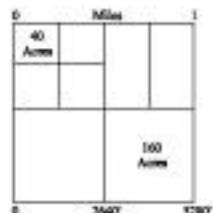
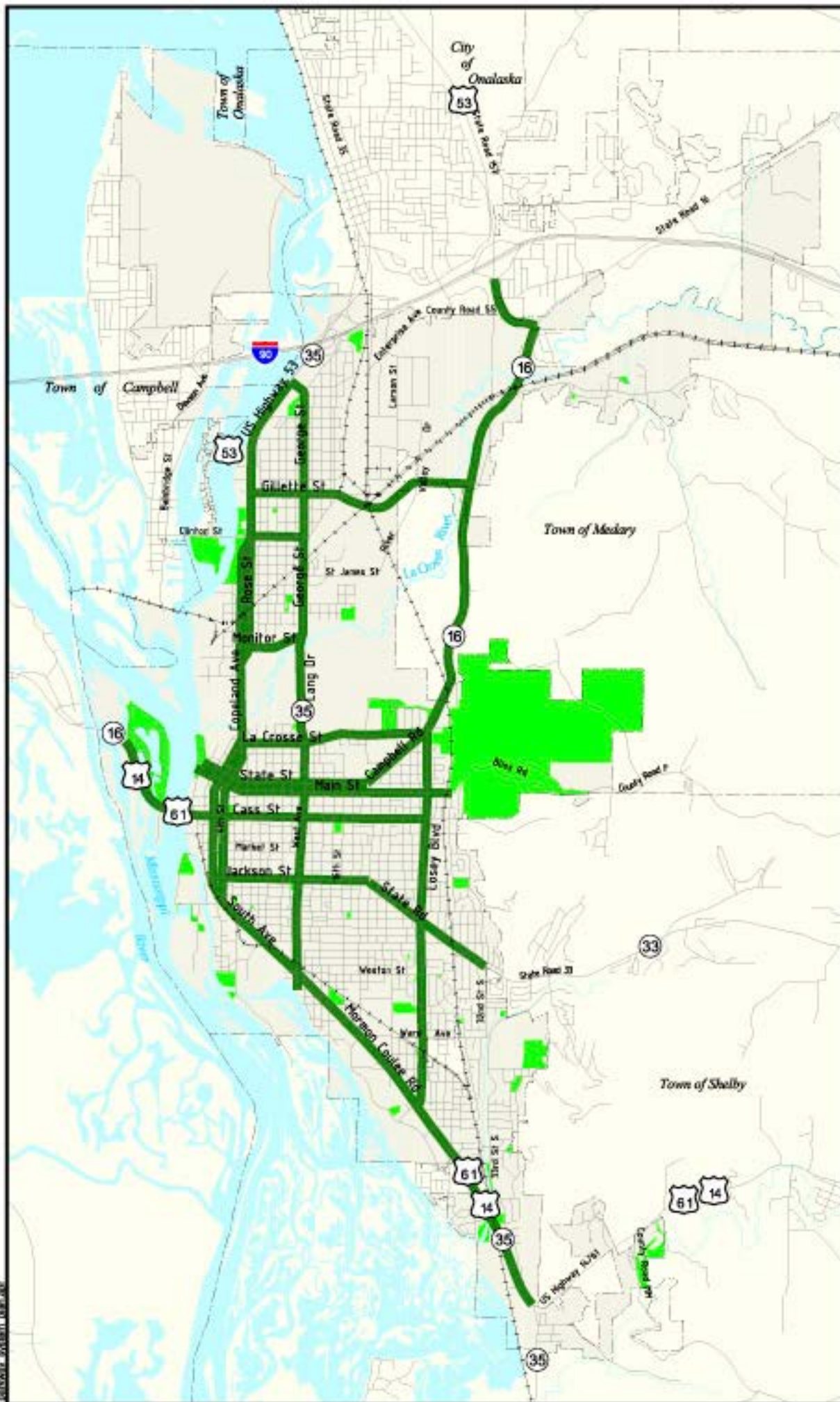
However, a parkway system can add significantly to a community's quality of life and should be given serious consideration, even if implementation is a long and arduous process. Recognizing that it will take time to implement, it is crucial that the City identify potential parkway locations so that opportunities to begin building the system are not lost.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Parkway System Plan.** In conjunction with street reconstruction, major redevelopment, and new development, the City shall create a system of parkways, as illustrated by Figure 6-3. Parkway will vary in design across the City, since some will be built in newly developing areas where optimal rights-of-way can be obtained. Others will be constructed in more constrained locations. Traffic capacity and posted speeds may also vary according to the function of each parkway in the road network.

**Figure 6-3
Parkway
System
Plan**

-  Municipal Boundary
-  City of La Crosse
-  Water
-  Railroads
-  Roads
-  Parkway
-  Existing Parks



**City of
La Crosse**
*Comprehensive
Plan*

Major Road Corridors

There are several types of major road corridors in La Crosse, including:

- Residential Corridors
- Commercial Corridors
- Limited Access (Highway) Corridors

Each of these types of corridor carries large volumes of traffic but each is in a different setting and, therefore must respond to different conditions.

Objective 9: Major Corridor Appearance. Improve the appearance of major road corridors to establish a positive image of La Crosse.

Because major road corridors are frequently traveled, their appearance contributes greatly to the overall image of La Crosse. The key elements contributing to the visual quality and character of major road corridors include: signs, lighting, utility lines, landscaping and screening.

While the appearance of all roadways affects the overall community image, this section focuses on appearance issues specific to major road corridors, particularly commercial and limited-access roadway (highway) corridors.

Residential Corridors

This category refers to major roads that abut housing, such as Losey Boulevard, Rose Street, and portions of South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road. In many cases, homes were built along these roads before they became major thoroughfares. As traffic volumes have increased, these corridors become less desirable places to live. To a certain extent landscaping and screening can mitigate the effect of traffic on abutting housing.

In some areas these residential corridors also contain numerous individual driveway openings that can pose traffic hazards. However, unless these homes have good alley access, closing or reducing driveway openings is not generally feasible.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Public Improvements.** The City shall include extra landscaping and berming along residential properties when installing public landscaping along these corridors or when building new arterial roads that abut property planned for residential use.
- 2. Private Improvements.** The City shall require new residential development to provide sufficient plantings and/or berming along major road corridors.

Commercial Corridors

Major commercial corridors, such as Highway 53/Copeland Avenue, Highway 14/61/South Avenue, and Highway 16 are some of the busiest roads in La Crosse. These corridors present the greatest challenge in terms of community image since they are intensely developed and contain some of the least attractive visual environments in the City. The appearance of commercial corridors is affected by the quality and amount of signage, lighting, landscaping and utility lines along the road edge. The type and appearance of buildings and land uses along road corridors also contribute to their image. Design guidelines for these elements are outlined in Appendix A.

Policies/Actions:

1. **“Big Box” Ordinance.** In conjunction with development of building design standards as recommended elsewhere in this plan, the City shall develop standards specific to the design of “big box” and other strip-type commercial development as part of the Unified Development Ordinance.
2. **Improve Quality and Lessen Number of Signs.** The City shall revisit the sign regulations adopted in 2002 in five years to evaluate whether they have helped improve the visual quality of the community. If deemed necessary by the evaluation, modifications to the sign regulations shall be made in a timely manner.
3. **Control Off-premise Advertising.** The City shall consider adopting an ordinance requiring the amortization of all off-premise advertising within 30 years of the date of adoption.

Off-premise advertising, commonly known as billboards, can be a major community image issue. While some billboards can be reasonably attractive, they essentially represent visual pollution and can have a severe negative impact on a community’s visual environment. Nonetheless, billboards are also a means of local business advertising and property-owner income. It should also be noted that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation has a program to install clusters of small signs near highway exits and intersections announcing businesses that serve travelers, thus reducing the need for private billboards for those businesses.

4. **Lighting Program.** The City shall establish a program for systematic installation and replacement of light fixtures along commercial corridors in conjunction with street reconstruction. Such a program would reflect the guidelines described above.
5. **Commercial Site Landscaping.** The City shall upgrade its site plan review standards to require screening along the edge of parking lots and landscaping within parking lots to break up large expanses of pavement, identify pedestrian walkway areas, and provide welcomed shade.

One of the more noticeable negative features in commercial corridors is the lack of screening of large parking lots. Thus, passersby often view a continuous, uninterrupted expanse of pavement between buildings and the road edge. A low landscaped screen at the edge of parking lots can dramatically improve the visual character of commercial corridors by adding greenery and blocking views of parked cars and large expanses of pavement.



Parking lot screening can greatly enhance streetscape appearance

6. **Street Tree Planting Program.** The City shall continue to provide for systematic street tree planting, replacement, and maintenance in its capital improvements program and annual budget. The City will also work to coordinate street tree planting and maintenance efforts with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and La Crosse County Highway Department.
7. **Utility Relocation.** The City shall consider relocating or burying utility lines in conjunction with streetscape improvements, road widening, and/or area revitalization projects. The City's share of the cost of this work will need to be negotiated with the various utility providers.

Limited Access Corridors

This category refers to roadways such as I-90 and portions of Highway 53, Highway 14/61, and Highway 16 that have a very wide right-of-way and no, or limited, direct access to adjoining properties. These corridors are designed for through trips and carry large volumes of traffic. The appearance of these corridors can be improved by increasing the variety and color of landscaping, highlighting natural features, and establishing theme treatments in key locations.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Landscaping.** The City shall work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and La Crosse County Highway Department to identify locations along limited access corridors where trees and/or shrubs should be planted and coordinate planting and maintenance efforts.

2. Theme Treatments. As opportunities arise, such as when bridges are reconstructed or roadways rebuilt, the City shall encourage, and work cooperatively with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the La Crosse County Highway Department to develop prototypical design treatments for bridges, walls, and lighting along major limited access corridors. Theme treatment should be coordinated with efforts to establish City gateways.



Landscaping can improve the appearance of limited access highways



Noise walls can be designed to establish an attractive and consistent visual theme

Implementation Program

This section describes the major actions involved in implementing the Urban Design plan element. Table 6-1 is intended to guide City staff and the Common Council in setting priorities for capital budgeting and staff allocation. It is expected that this table will be reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, to establish new priorities.

Priority ranking is defined as follows:

- 1 = highest or short-term priority
- 2 = secondary or mid-term priority
- 3 = lowest priority or represents on-going activities

Table 6-1 : Implementation Actions for Urban Design

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	Development Design Standards. Incorporate the principles and design guidelines contained in Appendix A into the Unified Development Ordinance.	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council
1	Best Management Practices. Incorporate BMPs into the Unified Development Ordinance.	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council
1	Street Design Standards. Incorporate the principles and design guidelines contained in Appendix A into the Unified Development Ordinance.	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council
1	Flexible Subdivision Design. Create and adopt standards to foster flexible subdivision design, such as TND and rural cluster housing.	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council
1	Sign Controls. Review and revise as necessary, the City’s sign regulations to incorporate the principles and design guidelines contained in Appendix A.	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council
1	Control Off-Premise Advertising. Consider adopting an ordinance requiring the amortization of all off-premise advertising within 30 years.	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council
2	Parkway System. Create a system of parkways, as illustrated on Figure 6-5, in conjunction with street reconstruction, major redevelopment and new development.	Planning Department Public Works Department Parks Department Common Council

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
2	Pedestrian and Bicyclist Network. Develop an interconnected network of sidewalks, bike lanes, and bike/ped paths in conjunction with new development and street reconstruction.	Planning Department Public Works Department Parks Department Common Council
2	“Big-Box” Ordinance. Develop and adopt standards specific to the design of “big-box” and other strip-type commercial development as part of the Unified Development Ordinance	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council
2	Neighborhood Conservation Districts. Develop neighborhood conservation districts (and corresponding development guidelines) where deemed necessary to provide additional protection of older neighborhoods that are not designated historic districts.	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council
2	Create Gateways. Identify locations for City and neighborhood gateways and install gateway features such as monument signs, public art, and distinctive landscaping.	Planning Department Public Works Department Common Council
2	Traffic Calming. Incorporate traffic calming techniques in select locations to discourage cut-through traffic and/or to slow traffic speeds. See the Transportation plan element for additional information on traffic calming.	Planning Department Public Works Department Plan Commission Common Council
3	City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update. Continue to implement the recommendations in the <i>City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update</i> .	Planning Department Public Works Department Plan Commission Heritage Preservation Commission Common Council
3	Public Open Space Connections. Continue to explore opportunities to acquire additional land or easements along the rivers, the bluffs and the La Crosse River marsh.	Planning Department Parks Department Common Council Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Various conservation organizations
3	Streetscape Improvements. Continue to install streetscape improvements such as trees, ornamental lighting, special pavement, and banners in conjunction with street reconstruction, new street construction, or other public improvement projects.	Public Works Department Planning Department Common Council Wisconsin Department of Transportation La Crosse County

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
3	Wayfinding System. Continue to implement, improve upon, and expand the wayfinding approach and design guidelines in the <i>City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update</i> .	Public Works Department Planning Department Common Council
3	Utility Lines. Require utility lines in new subdivisions to be buried and work to bury or relocated existing utility lines where feasible.	Public Works Department Planning Department Common Council

Appendix A

Urban Design Guidelines

The following general design guidelines are intended to provide a framework for development review and the creation of design review standards that will be formally adopted into the zoning ordinance (Unified Development Ordinance). Guidelines are provided for buildings site design, including landscaping and signage, and street design. These guidelines are intended to apply to traditional neighborhoods as well as newly developing areas.

Building Design Guidelines

New Buildings. New buildings, whether a single, infill structure, or a larger block-sized development, must be designed to respect the established or traditional characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood. This does not mean that new buildings must appear old or replicate certain architectural styles. Rather, they must be compatible in terms of scale, materials, and orientation to the street.

- The architecture of new buildings should respect the local context, with building heights and massing that are compatible with those in the surrounding area.
- Buildings materials should be compatible with materials commonly used on other buildings in the area. In areas where a wide variety of building materials exist (i.e., strip commercial corridors), use of durable materials in neutral or earth-tone colors is recommended. Where new developments contain more than one building, all building materials and colors should be coordinated.
- All building façades that face onto public streets should include doors and windows.
- In traditional neighborhoods, commercial buildings and front entrances should be placed close to the sidewalk to enhance visibility and pedestrian access. They should also have a high degree of storefront transparency. This can provide both natural surveillance and visual interest.
- Building setbacks should generally conform to the prevailing front setback on the block. Minimum required setbacks are established in the zoning ordinance.



THIS: Windows and entry doors face the street



NOT THIS: Blank façade - No windows or doors facing the street

Building Rehabilitation. Many older homes and commercial buildings in La Crosse have retained their original character and charm but are in need of rehabilitation to combat the effects of age and the elements.

- Exterior improvements should relate to the original building design, to the extent feasible.
- Older buildings that have been altered and “modernized” to the point where they no longer retain any of their original design integrity pose a more difficult problem. If

feasible, an attempt should be made to restore the basic elements of the original building design, such as door and window openings.

Historic Properties. Historic or architecturally significant buildings and areas should be preserved because they express the City’s heritage and add beauty and charm to their surroundings.

- Improvements to properties in La Crosse that have been formally designated as landmarks at the local or national level should follow the design guidelines and standards adopted by the City and/or the Secretary of the Interior Design Standards to ensure they are preserved in an appropriate and sensitive manner. Improvements to historic properties is covered in greater detail in the *Heritage Preservation Plan*.



Historic home at 2027 Cass St.

Housing Variety. It is important to providing a variety of housing choices within neighborhoods to meet the diverse and changing needs of residents.

- Neighborhoods should contain a range of housing types, densities, and occupancy options including single-family detached units, townhouses, condominiums, and rental apartments.
- Large housing projects that consist of a single building type should be discouraged.
- When mixing housing types in a development, it is preferable for the transition between types to occur at the rear rather than the front of the property (i.e., across the back yard, courtyard, or parking area, rather than across the street).

Attached Housing Design. Attached housing includes duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, condominiums and apartments. Following are some basic design guidelines to ensure attached housing is attractive and compatible with detached single-family housing.

Compatibility and Variety

- Attached housing should emulate single-family housing in its basic architectural elements – pitched roofs, articulated façades, visible entrances, porches or balconies, with a maximum height of three to four stories.
- Attached housing, including duplexes, should be built in small groupings integrated into the overall neighborhood context rather than being concentrated into large project sites. In addition, they should be located at the edges of single family districts, rather than create an island of multi-family housing in the middle of a single family block.
- Attached housing can function as a transition between commercial and single family areas, but should also be located in high-amenity locations adjacent to parks and other amenities.

Exterior Design

- Ensure that attached housing fits into the neighborhood through the use of compatible scale, height, roof pitch, building massing and materials.
- Design the front and back façades with appropriate levels of formality. The front, as the more public side, should receive the more formal treatment, while trash/recycling storage, play equipment and outdoor storage should be located in the back. The main entry(s) should face the street. Porches and front steps should face the local street.
- Building façades facing streets should be articulated with windows and doors. Porches and balconies should be encouraged. Façades consisting of long blank walls or a series of garage doors should be prohibited.



Protruding balconies help articulate this façade

Outdoor Spaces

- Provide each housing unit with clearly defined private or semi-private outdoor space such as a yard, patio, porch or balcony, with direct access from inside the unit.
- Control access to private outdoor paths and spaces via gateways, fences, plant materials or enclosed locations.

- Define all outdoor spaces, distinguishing between those reserved for residents and those open to the public. Provide visual indications of the boundaries between private space, public space and shared space through building juxtaposition and use of low fences or hedges, and paths.

Parking Areas

- Resident parking areas, including garages, should be located to the side or rear of buildings. If parking lots must be located on the street frontage, they should be screened by a low hedge, fence, gate or similar visual buffer. Garages should not be located closer to the primary street frontage than residential buildings.
- On large multiple family developments, extend the network of surrounding streets through the site to improve circulation, visibility, security and integration into the surrounding neighborhood.



Tuck-under garages

Mixed Use and Commercial Areas. Mixed use includes two or more types of uses such as shops and housing, located above and below one another. Multiple use means two or more types of land use located side by side, although not necessarily abutting one another or in the same building.

- Ideally, the mix should contain mutually supportive uses, pedestrian-friendly gathering places, flexible parking requirements and good pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access.
- Traditional neighborhood mixed use “nodes” may combine small-scale retail, services, offices, housing and civic uses within single buildings and in separate buildings in close proximity.
- Larger commercial mixed use districts may combine a variety of housing types with commercial and office uses. Compatible housing may include upper-story dwellings, townhouses, and other types of attached or senior housing.
- In neighborhood commercial nodes, the size of individual retail or office uses should be limited to ensure that businesses are designed to serve their immediate surroundings, rather than a regional market.



Vertical mixed use – traditional design



Vertical mixed use – contemporary design

- New neighborhoods should include compact mixed use activity centers within walking distance of housing and linked by interconnected streets, sidewalks and bike trails and convenient transit access. Parks and public or civic buildings (e.g., schools and libraries) should be incorporated into neighborhoods, where appropriate.
- Commercial “strip” or “big box” areas can be made more mixed and pedestrian-friendly through the placement of smaller buildings close to the street along the edges of parking lots or along new internal streets, incorporation of public open space, particularly landscaped walkways, and introduction of higher-density housing within the development.



The appearance of “big-box” and “strip” commercial areas can be improved through ample landscaping, attractive architecture, discreet signage, and use of high quality materials.



A typical “sea of asphalt” in front of a “big-box” store.

Site Design Guidelines

Parking. Parking lots, particularly along major commercial corridors, typically occupy large areas of land. As such, the appearance of parking lots contributes significantly to the overall character of the City.

- Parking should be provided in a manner that does not interfere with pedestrian movement or drastically alter the character of traditional neighborhood commercial nodes.

- Locate parking lots behind or to the side of buildings wherever possible in order to reduce the visual impact of surface parking.
- Provide flexibility in parking requirements for traditional commercial areas by allowing some “required” parking to be provided on-street and encourage shared parking arrangements.
- The ground floor façade of parking structures abutting any public street or walkway should be designed and architecturally detailed like other commercial or office buildings.

Landscaping. The guidelines below focus on parking lot landscaping, again because parking lots occupy large areas of land, and parking lot landscaping and screening often comprise a large portion of the landscaping required for development projects. In addition, general site landscaping must be tailored to the specific site. Minimum landscape requirements are outlined in the zoning ordinance.

- All parking lots and loading/delivery areas should be landscaped and screened from abutting streets, public sidewalks, or adjacent residential land uses.
- Establish clear edges around parking lots through the use of landscaping, low walls or fences. This is particularly important in traditional neighborhood commercial areas in order to extend the visual effect of the building line along the street edge.
- Large parking lots (over 50 cars) should contain landscape islands of sufficient size to support overstory trees. Landscaping within parking lots should be strategically placed to break up large expanses of pavement, identify pedestrian walkway areas, and provide welcomed shade.



Parking lot screening should adequately obscure direct views of vehicles and provide an attractive, well-defined street edge.

Signs. The presence of too many signs of various sizes, heights, and colors can reduce sign effectiveness by introducing too much visual competition and clutter. Providing some level of control over sign design and placement can enhance sign legibility and improve the overall appearance of commercial areas. The following general guidelines should be considered in conjunction with the specific sign regulations regarding number, size, and setbacks, outlined in the City’s zoning ordinance.

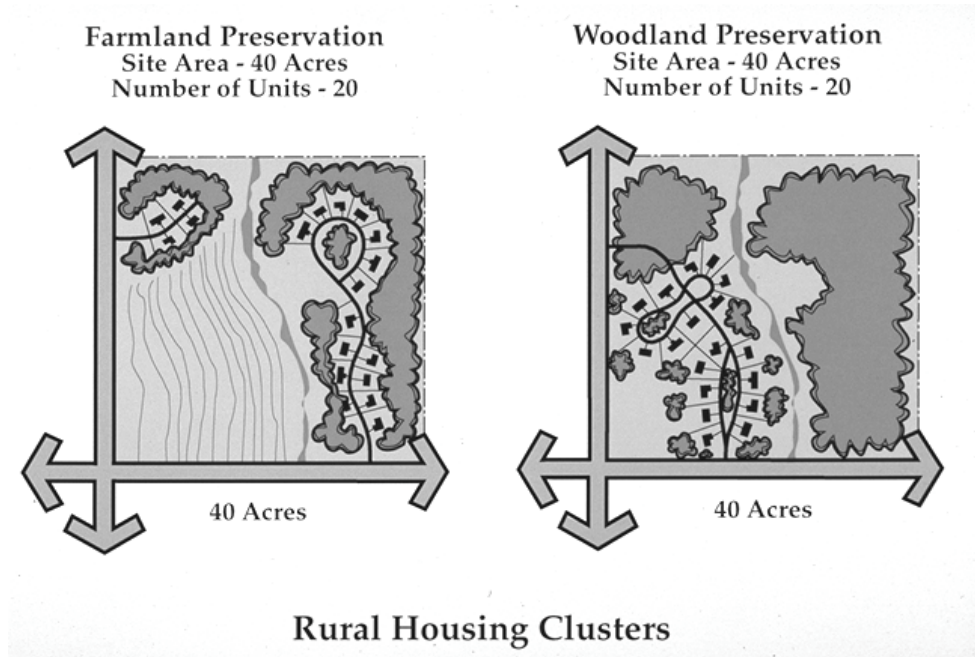
- Sign materials should be consistent or compatible with of the exterior materials on building façade on which they are to be displayed.
- A sign program should be developed for buildings that house more than one business (e.g., strip center). Signs need not match, but should be compatible in terms of the style, composition, materials, and colors.
- Low-profile ground signs or monument signs are encouraged for highway-oriented commercial uses such as restaurants and gas stations.
- External illumination of signs is permitted by incandescent, metal halide or fluorescent light that emits a continuous white light. Light shall not shine directly onto the ground or adjacent property.



Attractive multi-tenant signage can be created through the use of high quality materials, internal illumination, discreet sign size, and appropriate sign location.

Low Impact Development and Conservation Design. As new development occurs in the coulees and redevelopment occurs in older, developed areas of the City, opportunities exist to ensure that development is done in an environmentally sensitive and integrated manner.

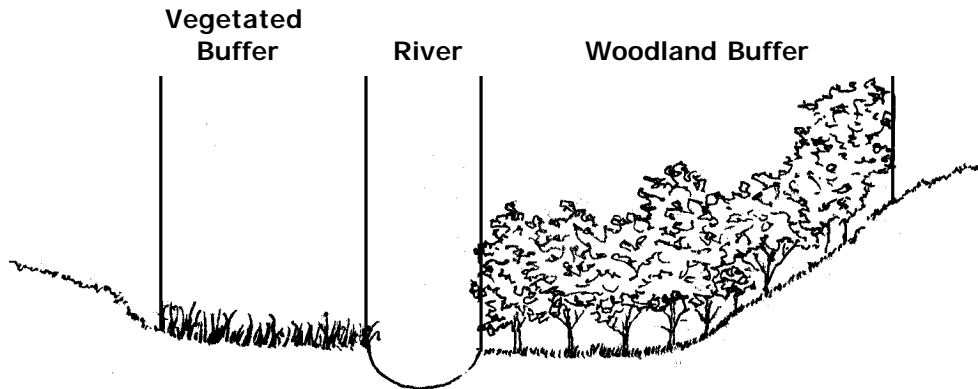
- New neighborhoods should be well integrated with their surrounding environment. Where new neighborhoods are immediately adjacent to established neighborhoods they should be linked visually and functionally via street connections and bicycle facilities.
- Flexible site design techniques, such as cluster development or TND should be encourage in new neighborhood development, particularly in areas where preservation of resources is a priority.



New development in the coulees, as well as redevelopment, particularly on the riverfront, should be designed in a manner that minimizes environmental impacts through the use of “best management practices”. These BMPs are described in the Public Utilities and Natural Resources plan elements and generally include:

- Restrictions on grading and vegetation removal on slopes of 20% or more to control erosion.
- Restriction on removal of large trees and wooded areas and grading, filling, and soil compaction within the “drip line” of trees (typically the area under the tree canopy).
- Limits on the amount of impervious surface that can be created.
- Use of natural storm water infiltration techniques where possible, to reduce the need for storm sewer, curb and gutter.
- Restrictions on the use of lawn fertilizer.
- Creation of buffer areas around wetlands, streams, bluff lines and coulee ridge tops.

- Where development is allowed on the bluffs or in coulee valleys, it should not extend above the crest of the bluff or valley wall and should be sited to be visually-obscured from areas below.
- In addition to the BMPs described above, new riverfront development should follow these general guidelines to preserve public riverfront access and protect the its visual and environmental character.
 - New structures and landscaping shall be sited so as not to obstruct, but rather frame, significant or attractive views of the river.
 - New buildings shall be set back at least 30-feet from the top of the river bank to maintain space to construct a public walkway along the river. Where there is sufficient lot depth, larger building setbacks will be required (typically 100-ft). Setbacks will be determined during site plan review in accordance with standards adopted in the zoning ordinance.
 - Landscape plantings in new development shall complement and enhance the natural or indigenous riverfront vegetation.
 - Landscape buffers shall be established along the river edge to maintain a natural appearance, except in areas specifically intended for higher intensity uses or direct river access (e.g., boat dock/promenade).



Street Design Guidelines

The street system is a fundamental element of neighborhood design. The choice of street pattern impacts the visual image and character of neighborhoods. The street system in La Crosse is mostly in place and, particularly in older neighborhoods, follows a traditional grid layout pattern with adjacent sidewalks and on-street parking. In general, the grid pattern facilitates through connections and potentially, interaction among neighborhoods. Opportunities to enhance this system will likely occur in conjunction with street reconstruction. The following design guidelines are intended for public streets, but are equally appropriate for private streets.

Pedestrian-Friendly Street Design Enhancements

Design enhancements, such as sidewalks, make the La Crosse street system more pedestrian-friendly and should apply to all streets, from local residential streets to highly traveled arterials. Common enhancements include sidewalks, bicycle paths, landscaping and/or street trees, lighting and traffic calming devices.

Connected Streets

- Residential streets should be designed to move motor vehicles at appropriate speeds to and from the home while also encouraging bicycling and walking and creating an attractive forecourt for neighborhood housing.

Sidewalks

- Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of all streets and be paved in concrete.
- The minimum sidewalk width should be six feet so two adults can walk comfortably side-by-side.
- Sidewalks should be set at least five feet behind the curb to provide space for street trees and snow storage. However, this does not apply in the downtown and other locations where buildings abut the sidewalk. In such locations, the sidewalk should extend between the building face and the street curb except to allow for street trees or other plantings.

Bicyclist Network

- New neighborhoods should be designed to include comprehensively planned networks of sidewalks and pathways for pedestrians and bicyclists to ensure continuity and connections between neighborhoods, commercial sites, parks, schools, and other key destinations.

- Bike trails and lanes should be designed in accordance with the standards in the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Element* adopted as part of the *La Crosse Area Long-Range Transportation Plan*. Basic standard include:
 - On-street bicycle lanes on curbed streets should be a minimum of five feet wide.
 - Paved shoulder bikeways should be 10 feet wide.
 - Off-road bicycle paths should be a minimum of 8 feet wide; however, 10 feet is desirable for two-way traffic.



Residential street with paved sidewalks and boulevard trees



Dedicated bike lanes

(photo from Tom Huber, Wisconsin State Bicycle Coordinator)

Street Trees and Landscaping. The presence of large, over-story trees can greatly enhance the appearance of roadways. They visually “soften” the road appearance and help give wide roadways a sense of human scale. Part of the charm and character of traditional neighborhoods is derived from the canopy that mature street trees cast over sidewalks and streets. Street trees also provide cooling shade and a home for wildlife.

- Street trees should be planted in accordance with a Master Tree Planting Plan and Program to ensure species coordination and minimize mono-culture plantings to guard against devastating loss through disease.
- Lost trees should be replaced in a timely manner with the same species, or if unavailable or unsuitable, with species of similar mature size and form.
- Boulevard plantings consisting of flowers, native grasses, etc., should be allowed and encouraged provided they do not obstruct views or interfere with pedestrian travel. Private property owners who plant their boulevards should assume responsibility for maintaining the plants.
- Trees and landscaping must be integrated with many other fixtures along the roadway, including light poles, utility poles and lines, road signage, and underground utilities.
- Boulevard trees and landscaping must be selected from species that can tolerate hot, dry conditions, vehicle emissions and salt-spray.
- A low landscaped screen, up to three feet tall, along the right-of-way line or at the edge of parking lots would dramatically improve the visual character of commercial corridors by adding greenery, blocking the view of parked cars, and breaking up the large expanses of pavement.
- Along limited access (highway) corridors, it is generally best to use tall, over-story trees to give these corridors some sense of human scale. Providing vertical elements along the roadway edge can visually reduce the width of these multi-lane corridors.
- Plantings along limited access corridors should be strategically placed to screen less desirable views and to maintain open views of attractive areas along the corridor. Clusters of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs should be used to add year-round color and seasonal interest to the corridor.



Images of North Third Street "before" (above) and "after" (below) streetscape improvements



Street Lighting. Lighting is an essential component of any roadway. Because of its prevalence, lighting can significantly affect the appearance and character of a roadway. The number, height and style of light fixtures, and the amount and color of the light cast are the primary design variables that contribute to roadway appearance. Following are some general design guidelines for lighting:

- The height, style and spacing of street lighting must reflect the type of roadway and speed of travelers as well as the character of the area where it is located. Pedestrian-scaled lighting typically has a 12 to 16-foot mounting height, spaced about every 100 to 200 feet, and uses an ornamental lantern and post style. Taller lights (e.g., 30 feet and taller) are generally appropriate along larger, wider roadways.
- It is generally preferable to use the fewest number of light fixtures necessary to achieve the desired level of illumination. Too many light fixtures increase the appearance of “visual clutter” along a roadway.
- Light pole style, materials and color should be coordinated along corridors and through neighborhoods and districts. It is generally preferable to use a consistent pole style and color along a corridor or within specific areas of a corridor or district to establish design unity.
- Common roadway light fixtures include: metal halide, high-pressure sodium, and mercury vapor. In general, metal halide produces the most “natural” light color, similar to incandescent light. However, high-pressure sodium tends to be more efficient and economical.



Traditional styled residential street lighting and contemporary styled commercial street lighting.

Traffic Calming. Traffic calming involves primarily physical measures that slow traffic and thereby increase safety and neighborhood livability. While traffic calming is generally targeted toward local residential streets, traffic calming strategies may also be appropriate for busier streets in residential areas, high pedestrian activity areas, and in older commercial areas where buildings and sidewalks are close to the street. Several examples of traffic calming techniques are illustrated below.

- corner bump-outs
- textured cross walk pavement or striping
- raised intersections
- traffic circles



Traffic circle on local residential street [note: excessive signage can detract from appearance and may not always be necessary]

Utility Lines. Utility lines and appurtenant structures (e.g., service boxes and transformers) can significantly impact the visual quality of a community. Historically, utility lines have been concentrated along limited access (highway) and commercial corridors. They often consist of tall, wooden or metal poles supporting a number of utility wires, which create a cluttered visual environment, and can result in unsightly pruning of street trees.

- Overhead utility lines should be relocated underground; or, if that is not feasible, relocated in less visible locations.
- Where burying utility lines is impractical, the visual impact of utility lines may be minimized by designing special, less obtrusive utility poles and by concentrating lines in as few locations as possible.
- Light pole colors should be used as they visually “disappear” into sky.

Wayfinding System Design:

- Signs should include consistent elements, such as color or use of a logo so they are easily identifiable as part of an overall system.
- Individual signs may vary in size, depending on the amount of information they contain and the speed of travelers on the adjacent roadway. For example, informational signs along roads with fast moving traffic need to be larger and include larger type face than signs on local streets, which would be viewed by people in slower moving vehicles, on bikes or walking.
- Individual signs may be free standing or mounted on existing structures, such as light poles. If free standing, it will be important to carefully consider the sign location in relation to the amount and location of other signs and fixtures along the road edge.
- Signs should be non-illuminated or internally illuminated.
- Consideration should be given to including a city symbol or logo element on signs to reinforce a unified theme.
- Signs should also be clustered along the arterial roads at periodic intervals, particularly near turning points. Placement should be more frequent near downtown, UW-L, Viterbo/Franciscan Skemp, and Gundersen/Lutheran, which may have a higher density of destinations and more visitors.



Wayfinding signage may consist of street or directional signs as well as kiosks and maps.

Special Theme Treatments. Unique design treatments can be applied to the primary structural elements within major roadway corridors to establish a sense of identity. The key in establishing a theme treatment is to establish an appropriate degree of design consistency or visual unity within a corridor.

- To establish visual unity, structural elements, such as listed below, should be consistent or compatible in terms of style, material, and color through the entire corridor.
 - Bridges (structures, railings and lighting),
 - Noise walls
 - Lighting systems
 - Landscaping
 - Banners or wayfinding signage systems

Transit access. Transit must be well integrated with land use in order to create a transit-friendly environment. The following guidelines

- Major commercial areas and other high-activity areas such as around the University or hospitals, should incorporate transit stations in their site plans in locations with safe and convenient access.
- Transit station areas should provide good shelter from the elements and be designed to enhance the appearance of the streetscape.
- Transit stations should accommodate bicycle storage.



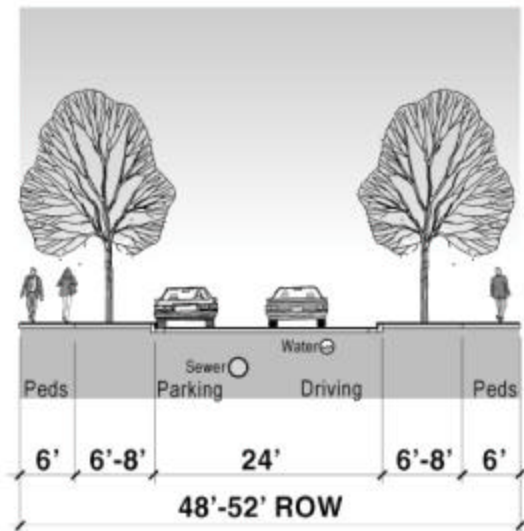
Transit shelters should be attractive and functional

Functional Hierarchy

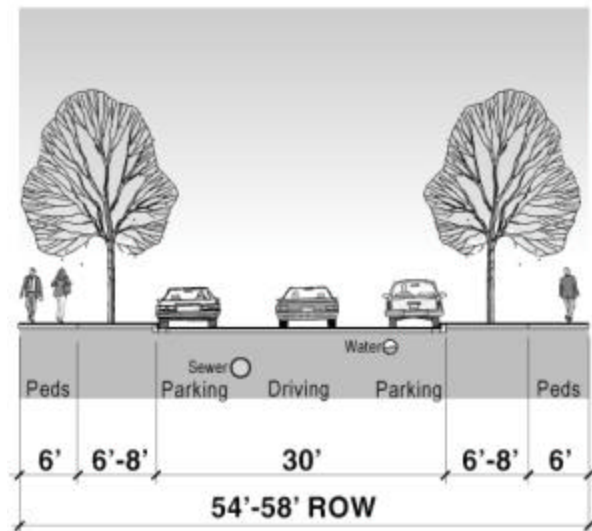
The street system network consists of a hierarchy of streets designed to carry various volumes and speeds of traffic, depending on their primary function. This hierarchy and related general design considerations are described below. Many of the basic principles of street system design illustrated below apply to both new and established neighborhoods. Additional discussion of street design and, in particular, access management techniques, are discussed in the *Transportation* plan element.

Local Street Design

- Local streets should be **relatively narrow in width** (e.g., 24-30 feet wide) to encourage slow traffic speeds that enhance the safety and enjoyment of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Local streets should provide for two travel lanes and parallel parking bays on both sides of the street. However, on streets less than 30 feet wide, parking should only be allowed on only one side.
- Parking should not be located within fifteen feet of a street intersection to maintain visibility.
- The bulb of cul-de-sacs should include a landscaped center island where sufficient space is available and with due consideration of maintenance implications.



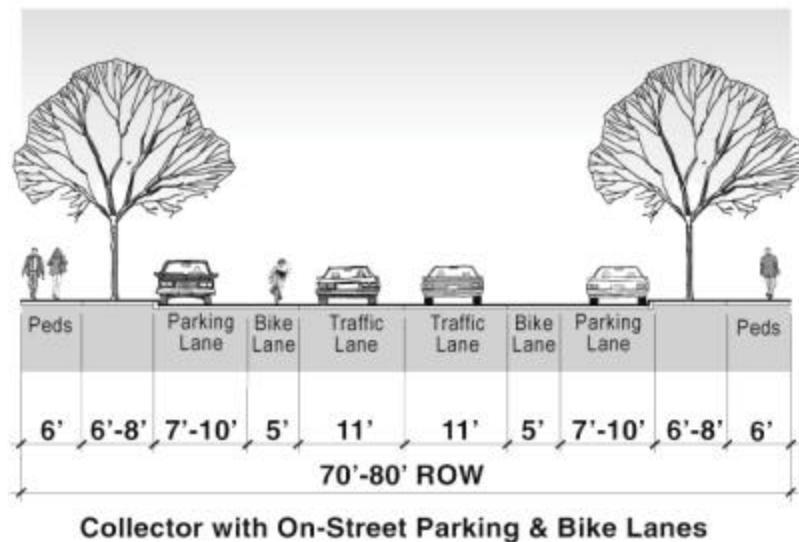
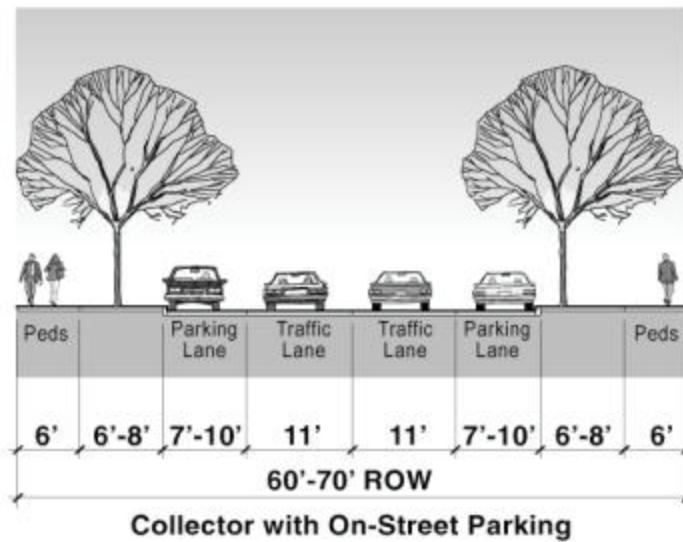
**Local Residential Street Design
with Parking on One Side**



**Local Residential Street Design
with Parking on Both Sides**

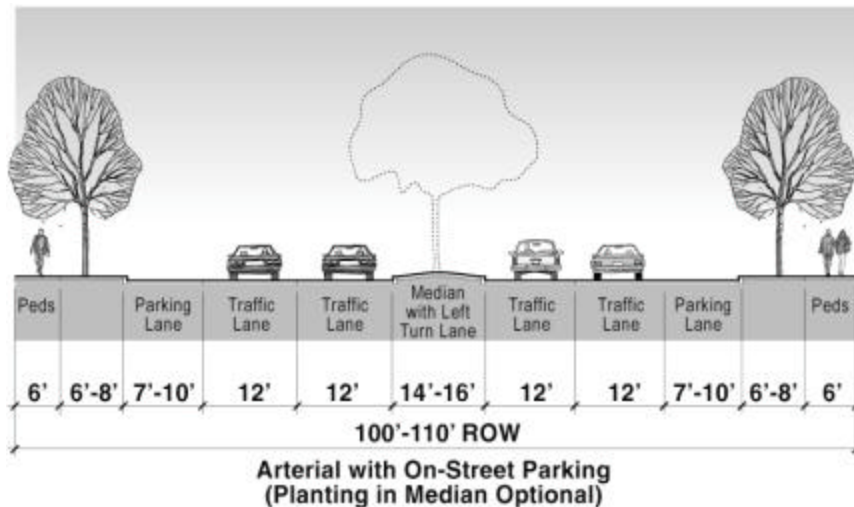
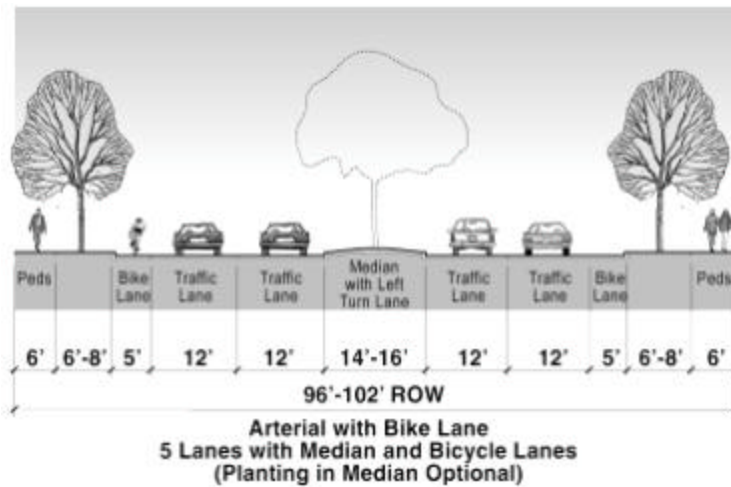
Collector Street Design

- Collector streets provide links through neighborhoods that connect to larger arterial roads and other collector roads.
- Collector streets typically allow for direct access; however, the number of access points should be minimized on collector streets carrying larger traffic volumes or higher posted speeds.
- Collector streets generally include two to four designated travel lanes.
- On-street parallel parking is generally permitted; however, parking may be prohibited or restricted on busier commercial roads or during peak traffic hours.



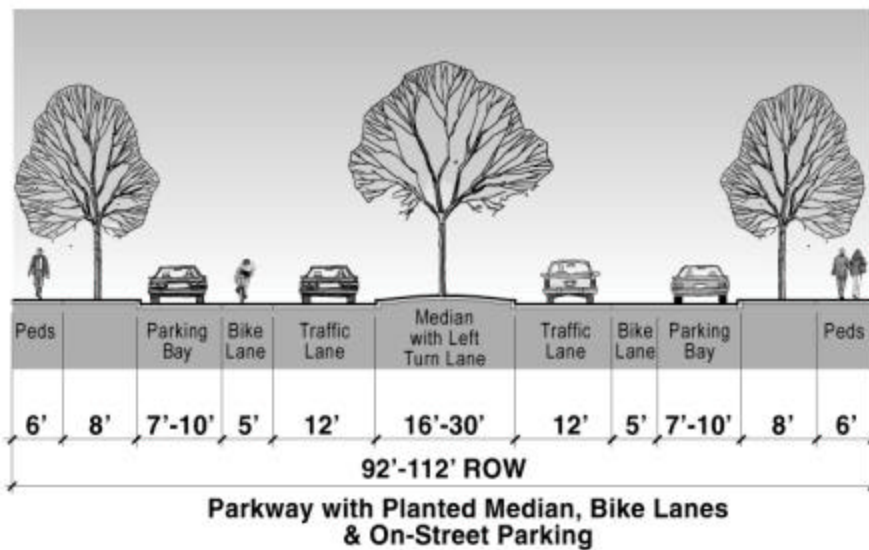
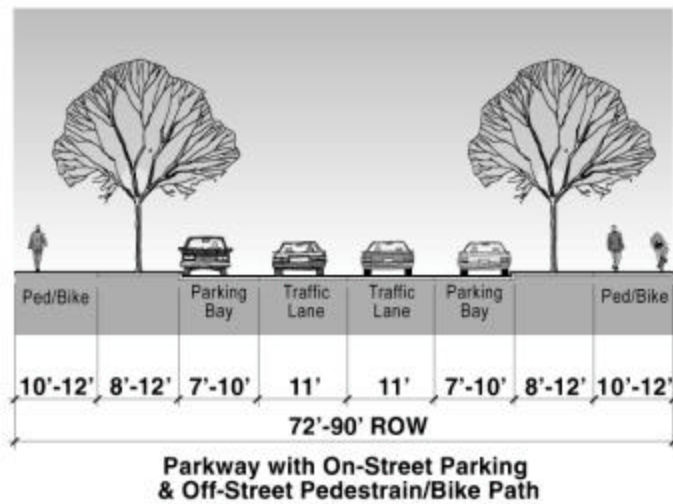
Arterial Road Design

- Arterial roads are intended to move traffic through the community at moderate speeds. To facilitate smooth traffic flow, direct access onto arterial roads is not recommended.
- Arterial roads generally provide four lanes for through-traffic movement. Sometimes a center turning lane is provided to facilitate left-turning movements. The necessary width of future arterial road right-of-way should be determined based upon the standards included in the *Transportation* plan element.
- On-street parking is not allowed on arterial roads.
- Direct access onto arterial roads should be minimized and coordinated through established spacing guidelines and shared access points.
- Landscaped medians are optional, but should be considered where space is available and with due consideration of maintenance implications.



Parkway Design

- Parkway typically consist of arterial or collector roads that are highly landscaped and include sidewalks, on-road bike lanes or off-road paths for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Parkway should include coordinated and decorative lighting, signage, and other pedestrian amenities.
- Parkway should be highly landscaped. Adjacent private landscaping should generally be improved and coordinated with the public landscaping.
- Parkway should connect parks, trails, major open spaces, and key community destinations to the greatest extent possible.



Confluence:

The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

7.0 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element

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Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ISSUES.....	1
AMOUNT OF PARK AND OPEN SPACE	1
INCREASED CONNECTIONS	2
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION.....	2
FACILITY USE AND DESIGN.....	2
ATHLETIC FIELDS	3
GUIDANCE FROM CONCEPT PLAN.....	4
OVERVIEW OF THE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN	
ELEMENT	5
SUMMARY OF PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OBJECTIVES	5
PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	7
EXISTING PARK AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM.....	7
NEW PARK AND OPEN SPACE NEEDS	18
GREENWAYS, PATHS, AND TRAILS.....	22
IMPLEMENTATION	28

List of Figures

Figure 7-1 Park Facilities.....	9
Figure 7-2 Trail System	15
Figure 7-3 Parkway System Plan.....	25

List of Tables

Table 7-1: Public Park and Private Recreation Facility Key.....	12
Table 7-2: Implementation Actions for the Park and Open Space Plan.....	28

Appendices

Appendix A: Parks and Pathways Classification and Guidelines of the National Recreation and Parks Association	
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Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element

La Crosse's park and open space system is a credit to the foresight of the City's residents of the early 1900s. In 1908 the Common Council formed the Board of Park Commissioners. This Board hired noted city planner and landscape architect John Nolen to assist in the planning of a park system. The plan that was produced consisted of a series of city squares and neighborhood and community parks, linked by tree shaded streets that provided both places of gathering and places of release from the trappings of the City. The plan also sought to capitalize on two of the City's unique and defining features, the riverfront and the scenic bluffs. Today much of Nolen's recommended park and open space system still lies intact. In fact, there are now more than 40 parks and open spaces occupying more than 1,300 acres within the City.

These parks and open spaces are more than just amenities. They are vital to the quality of life in a city. In addition to providing areas for exercise/recreation and relaxation, parks and open spaces help to shape the development patterns of a community, provide wildlife habitat and educational opportunities.

While the City's park and open space system is very good, it must be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the City's residents. As a community's demographics and recreational trends change, the type of facilities offered by the park and open space system must be adjusted to meet those changing needs. The purpose of the Park and Open Space plan element is to evaluate those changing needs and provide recommendations about the future of the City's park and open space system.

Summary of Parks, Recreation and Open Space Issues

The Conditions and Issues Report identified a number of issues that will need to be addressed relative to the park and open space system to achieve their full potential. The key issues are summarized below:

Amount of Park and Open Space

There are currently more than 40 park and open space areas occupying more than 1,300 acres within the City of La Crosse, not including the La Crosse River Marsh; of which the City currently owns roughly 400 acres. Because of the limited amount of undeveloped land

remaining in the City, creating new parks is a challenge. In addition, increasing the amount of public park and open space will also increase the amount of tax exempt land in the City, which is already at about 50 percent.

- How much park and open space land is needed to adequately service the City’s existing and future residents?
- What is the right mix of facilities and services (active vs. passive, organized vs. unorganized)?
- For newly annexed areas of the City, should each development provide public park and open space areas, or should it be private?
- What are possible fiscal impacts of creating additional park and open space in the City? How do the potential benefits of additional park/open space compare to the real costs?

Increased Connections

The City has many parks, and numerous significant open spaces including the La Crosse River Marsh, the Black, La Crosse, and Mississippi Rivers, as well as the river bluffs. A desire to have more interconnection between these features has been noted by the public. Similarly, input from community surveys and VisionFest indicate a strong desire for increased waterfront access.

- How can connections between parks and open space amenities be improved? Are there opportunities to acquire property or easements to create connections?
- Should public access (e.g., trails, boat/canoe launches) be increased to the Bluff, Marsh, and the Rivers?
- Are there ways that the City can increase waterfront access and park amenities along the City’s entire waterfront? What areas should be prioritized for improved access, and how should they be paid for?

Intergovernmental Coordination

Features such as the river bluffs, the Black, La Crosse, and Mississippi Rivers, and the La Crosse River Marsh extend beyond La Crosse’s municipal boundaries and beyond La Crosse’s control. It has been expressed that these features are very important to the residents of the City.

- Are there opportunities to coordinate with other jurisdictions, agencies, and interest groups to protect the interests of residents of the City of La Crosse?

Facility Use and Design

With limited land available to build new facilities in the City, shared use of park and school facilities may be necessary to meet demand for recreation. Good maintenance and appropriate upgrading of existing facilities can also ensure that facilities are safe and continue to meet the needs of the community.

- How can the school district and the park and recreation department expand and enhance their programs and efforts to share facilities? Are there other departments or entities that the park and recreation department could share sites with?
- What can the City do to improve the safety of park facilities?
- What should the City do to ensure park facilities and recreation program respond to changing demographics (i.e., increased elderly population, minimize language barriers)?
- Should permanent concession facilities be provided in Riverside Park or other parks? If so, what can the City do to ensure they are tasteful in design and enhance the character of the park?

Athletic Fields

La Crosse does not currently have significant athletic complex facilities. These facilities generally require large amounts of land, which is limited in La Crosse. By combining facilities in a complex, economies of scale can be realized. However, consolidating athletic facilities into one area and removing them from neighborhoods may make access more difficult for those with limited mobility (especially children and the elderly).

- Should the City actively seek opportunities to provide athletic complexes for baseball, softball, soccer, or other sports?
- Are there opportunities to create a major community center with athletic and recreation facilities in the City? Could aquatic facilities be incorporated in this facility?



Soccer game in Weigent Park

Guidance from Concept Plan

Input for the Concept Plan came from numerous sources, including a citywide survey, the VisionFest public meeting, multiple meetings with the Citizens Advisory Committee, as well as a number of reference materials pertaining to parks and open space. The Concept Plan emphasizes building on existing assets and neighborhoods. It provides the following direction regarding the Parks and Open Space plan element:

Existing Park and Open Space System: An emphasis should be placed on rehabilitating and/or improving existing parks in the City. Due to the limited availability of land, the City should also seek opportunities for reuse or joint use of underutilized public and semi-public properties, such as school facilities.

New Parks and Open Space: As new development occurs, the City should require fees or dedication of land for parks and open space. New developments should be linked to existing parks and open spaces through a system of green corridors and trails.

Green Belt: The City should continue to work towards creating a green belt along its eastern edge through public acquisition and/or regulation of environmentally sensitive lands.

Environment and Natural Resources: The City should proactively work to enhance, restore, and protect environmental features such as rivers, wetlands, bluffs, etc.

Riverfront: Parks along the Black, La Crosse, and Mississippi Rivers should be connected to the greatest extent possible. The City should work to acquire private lands along the waterfront to increase public access to this asset of the City. The City should also seek the creation of additional parks and open space on the waterfront.

Connected Trail Network: The City should continue its efforts to create a network of bike trails, including both on and off-road facilities.

Overview of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan element outlines a number of objectives and actions the City can take to improve the overall park and open space system in La Crosse. It recognizes that the park system is impacted by decisions regarding land use, urban design, transportation, neighborhood development, and the location and use of schools and other public facilities. The plan recommends both long-term and short-term actions to achieve a variety of objectives.

Summary of Parks, Recreation and Open Space Objectives

Existing Parks, Recreation & Open Space System

Objective 1: Park Maintenance. Improve park and open space system maintenance in order to improve overall appearance and enhance safety.

Objective 2: Protect Park Character. Establish zoning regulations to ensure that land uses adjacent to parks do not detract from the character or use of the City's park and open space system.

Objective 3: Safe Parks. Improve the real and perceived safety of the Park and Open Space System.

Objective 4: Waterfront Access. Improve public access to rivers and streams in La Crosse by increasing access opportunities where appropriate and ensuring adequate protection to sensitive waters and shoreline.

Objective 5: Bicycle Facilities. Upgrade and expand the existing trail system and facilities to increase connections and access to the park and open space system and improve transportation routes for bicyclists.

Objective 6: Cooperative Relationships. Maintain and enhance the cooperative relationships that exist between the City and various other entities to coordinate facility development use and programming.

Objective 7: Sale of Land. Prohibit the sale of any existing parks or open space except under very specific conditions.

New Parks & Open Space Facilities

Objective 8: Meet Changing Needs. Analyze changing demographics, and recreational trends on a regular basis in order to make timely changes to the park and open space system to meet the changing needs of the community.

Objective 9: New Park and Open Space Development. Ensure that provisions are made for new parks and/or open space to adequately serve new development or new recreational needs.

Objective 10: Special Park Facilities. Evaluate possibilities for new facilities, especially athletic complexes and concession facilities, in order to address deficiencies within the park and open space system.

Greenways, Paths, & Trails

Objective 11: Connected Park System. Improve connections between the City's waterfront, parks, open space areas, trails, and other places of significant interest to the community.

Objective 12: Parkway System. Create a network of parkways and boulevards on major arterials or collector roads to improve the City's overall appearance and identity, calm traffic, and provide improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities.



**Trail between Riverside Park
and Great River State Trail**

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Objectives and Actions

This section describes objectives and actions the City can take relative to the parks and open space system in La Crosse. By implementing these objectives and actions in the capital budget and through the creation of plans, ordinances, and policies, the City will be able to improve its park and open space system, and thereby improve the quality of life in La Crosse.

Existing Park and Open Space System

The existing parks and open space system in La Crosse contributes greatly to the character and livability of the City. With limited land for new park development, a priority must be placed on enhancing and maintaining the existing system of parks, open space, and recreational facilities. The location of existing park facilities are shown on Figure 7-1.

Likewise, as the face of the community changes and becomes more diverse, the park system will need to be responsive to changing facility and program needs. The following actions will help to maintain the current level of excellence in the park and open space system.

Objective 1: Park Maintenance. Improve park and open space system maintenance in order to improve overall appearance and enhance safety.

The City must continue to improve upon the maintenance and appearance of its park and open space system. Maintenance was identified as a significant shortfall for the park and open space facilities within the City of La Crosse.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Park-a-Year Program.** In order to improve the overall level of maintenance of the park and open space system, the Parks and Recreation Department shall designate one or more parks per year for major upgrades. To the extent appropriate, this could coincide with the development of neighborhood plans and become part of that public participation process. This could also provide class projects for university students involved in parks and recreation curriculum such as the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse recreation management program or the University of Wisconsin – Madison Landscape Architecture program.
- 2. Fencing.** The City shall routinely evaluate all fencing within the park and open space system to determine whether it is necessary and if it is in need of repair. Chain link fencing, while useful for ball containment, can detract from the appearance of a park, make the park less inviting, and can be hazardous if in poor condition. Unless fencing is needed for ball containment or safety/security reasons, it should be removed to encourage more access and use of the parks.

3. **Athletic Fields.** The City shall improve athletic field maintenance in order to reduce the risk of injuries. Many athletic fields currently have uneven or irregular surfaces, which can increase the risk of injury.
4. **Weeds.** The City shall work to educate and inform the public of its conscious decision to limit the use of herbicides in the park and open space system, which has been done to reduce herbicide expenditures and minimize potential negative ecological consequences related to the use of herbicides.

Objective 2: Protect Park Character. Establish zoning regulations to ensure that land uses adjacent to parks do not detract from the character or use of the City's park and open space system.

Parks and open spaces are valuable elements of the community. The establishment of an overlay-zoning district will ensure that land use on property abutting or adjacent to City parks and open space does not deter from their character or use.

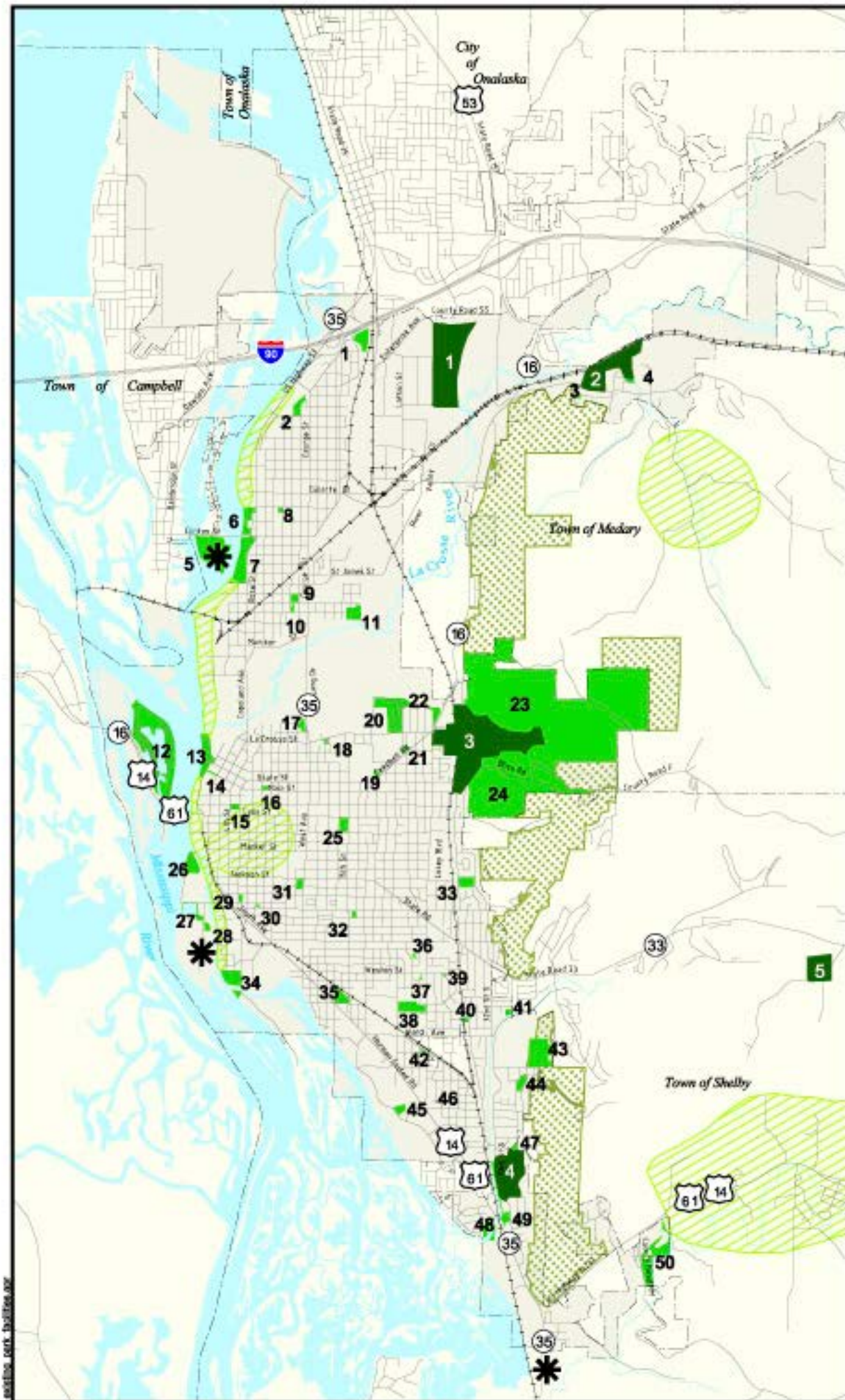
Policies/Actions:

1. **Compatible Land Uses.** In considering land use amendments and zoning changes on property adjacent to public parks, trails, and open space, the City shall allow only land uses that do not detract from the character or use of the park. Both the Park Board and the Plan Commission should provide recommendations regarding land use and zoning changes on property abutting public parkland.
2. **Site Purpose and Use.** The Park and Recreation Department shall identify intended uses of all sites in the park and open space system (e.g., natural area, passive use, active recreation, etc.). The Department shall also develop measures to avoid the overuse and over-programming of parks, as well as the consideration of the impact of park activities on the surrounding neighborhoods).

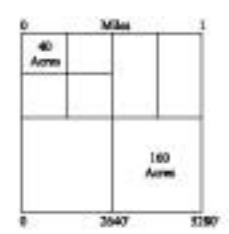


Kids Coulee

**Figure 7-1
Park
Facilities**



- Municipal Boundary
- City of La Crosse
- Water
- Railroads
- Roads
- Existing Parks
- Future Park Search Area
- Bluffland Conservancy / Park Area
- Potential Special Facility / Athletic Complexes
- Private Facilities (See table)
- Park Key (See Table)



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La Crosse**
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Objective 3: Enhance Safety. Improve the real and perceived safety of the park and open space system.

The City must ensure that its parks, trails, and open spaces are safe for users to enjoy. This will involve addressing both real and perceived safety concerns. The Park and Recreation Department will need to work with the La Crosse Police Department to determine whether perceptions about park safety are warranted. If so, efforts should be made to address these concerns.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Police Presence.** The Police Department shall provide increased presence in areas where safety concerns (particularly related to destructive or deviant behavior) have been identified. Bicycle and foot patrols can be used effectively to increase visible Police presence.
2. **Lighting.** The City shall evaluate park lighting of facilities and pathways to make sure they are adequately lighted. Additional lighting may be necessary in areas that the Police Department has identified as being problematic. However, care should be taken in locating light fixtures to minimize light pollution and spillover onto adjacent properties.
3. **Vegetation.** The Parks and Recreation Department shall maintain vegetation and landscaping on parkland to eliminate hazardous conditions (e.g., broken or rotten tree branches) and reduce potential hiding areas (e.g., brushy understory).
4. **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).** The City shall implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals in the design and maintenance of parks and trails to increase natural surveillance and visibility, enhance access control, and delineate “territories”.

Table 7-1 : Public Park and Private Recreation Facility Key

Map Number	Park Name	Address
1	Wittenberg Park	2940 George St (Wittenberg Pl)
2	Hickey Playground	1000 Palace St
3	Merry Meadows Park	4100 Meadowlark Lane
4	Springbrook Playground	4700 Northbrook Rd
5	West Copeland Park	401 Clinton St
6	Black River Beach	500 Logan St
7	Copeland Park	1001 Copeland Ave
8	Northside Community Pool	1450 Liberty St
9	Goose Green Park	1031 St Andrew St
10	South Goose Green Park	1032 St Andrew St
11	Red Cloud Park	500 Powell St
12	Pettibone Park	Pettibone Dr
13	Riverside Park/Spence Park	410 Veterans Memorial Dr
14	Civic Center Park	500 2nd St S
15	Cameron Park	400 King St
16	Burns Park	700 Main St
17	Leuth Park	1200 La Crosse St (700 12th)
18	Goosetown Park	1400 La Crosse St
19	Memorial Pool	1901 Campbell Rd
20	Myrick Park	2001 La Crosse St
21	Crowley Playground	2103 Campbell Rd
22	Roellig Park	600 Losey Blvd N
23	Hixon Forest	800 Milson (2600 Old Quarry)
24	Grandad Park	3200 Main St
25	Weigent Park	1500 Cass St
26	Houska Park	905 Joseph Houska Dr
27	Municipal Boat Harbor	950 Marco Dr
28	Carrol Field	1000 Marco Dr
29	Hood Park	500 Hood St
30	Farnam Park	700 Farnam St
31	Powell Park	1002 West Ave
32	Tower Park	1600 Farnam
33	Bluffview Park	2800 Jackson St
34	Green Island Park	2300 7th St S
35	Trane Park	1501 Chase St
36	Verchota Park	2300 Barlow St
37	Schuh Park	2225 Horton
38	Erickson Park	2324 Thompson St
39	Triangle Park	2101 Coulee Dr
40	Glendale Playground	2900 Glendale St
41	Starlite Park	2400 Drive In Rd
42	Diagonal Park	2935 23rd St

Map Number	Park Name	Address
43	Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park	3501 Park Ln
44	Hass Park	3115 Elm St
45	Seminary Park	3349 East Ave S
46	Highland Park	2480 Highland St
47	Hass II	3745 Elm St
48	Sherwood Manor Park	3200 Scarlett Dr
49	Johnson Park	4600 33rd St S
50	Roessler Park	Cty Rd MM
Map Number	Private Recreation Facility	Address
1	La Crosse Soccer Club	2300 Hauser Street
2	Walsh Golf Center	4203 CTH B
3	Forest Hills Country Club	
4	Hillview Golf Course	4225 33 rd Street South
5	Irish Hills Golf Course	W4980 Knoblauch Road

Objective 4: Waterfront Access. Improve public access to rivers and streams in La Crosse by increasing access opportunities where appropriate and ensuring adequate protection to sensitive waters and shoreline.

The confluence of the Black, La Crosse, and Mississippi Rivers has blessed the City with an abundance of waterfront. However, much of the waterfront remains private or inaccessible. Increasing public ownership of waterfront property would improve public access and also contribute to the creation of a continuous network of waterfront trails and parks.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Property Acquisition.** The City shall seek opportunities to improve access to the waterfront through purchase of property or public easements along the Black, La Crosse, and Mississippi Rivers and Mormon Creek. The City should also work to increase access and use of the La Crosse River Marsh for passive recreation, environmental education, as well as a limited number of biking/walking trails. In addition, the City shall explore opportunities to acquire property or conservation easements to preserve the Mormon Creek corridor, as much as is possible, prior to further development in this area, while maintaining access for fishing.
- 2. Waterfront Park Connections.** The City shall work to establish a network of connecting paths and greenways to link existing and planned waterfront parks together. This includes facilities such as the proposed Black River Trail between Riverside Park and Copeland Park, the reuse of the Mobil Oil/Patros site, and more preliminary plans for connections between Riverside Park and Isle La Plume, Isle La Plume and Green

Island Park, and Green Island Park and the 7th Street Boat Dock among others (see also Objective 11 Action 4).

3. **Ramp User Fees.** The City shall evaluate the implementation of user fees for municipal boat ramps. In the past, the Wisconsin Waterway Commission has recommended that all grant recipients establish voluntary pay stations at boat ramps/landings in order to defray costs of maintenance and to improve existing facilities. If the City chooses to establish a voluntary pay station, fees should be kept to a minimum (roughly \$1 - \$3 per day) so that use is not discouraged.

Objective 5: Bicycle Facilities. Upgrade and expand the existing trail system and facilities to increase connections and access to the park and open space system and improve transportation routes for bicyclists.

Recreational bike riding is a popular activity enjoyed by all segments of the population. For many City residents (including children and teens), bicycles provide the main or preferred mode of transportation. In addition, bicycle trails can function as attractive and safe links between parks, neighborhoods, and other attractions or destinations. Additional information regarding the design and location of bicycle facilities can be found in the Transportation Element and Urban Design Element.

Policies/Actions:

1. **New Trails.** The City shall continue to evaluate potential new trail locations. Areas with high potential include abandoned railroad grades and rail lines, as well as other linear features (i.e., utility right of ways) that can be used to enhance inter and intra-city connections. The City should continue to work towards constructing those trails identified in the *1995 Long Range Transportation Plan* adopted by the La Crosse Area Planning Committee. Trails identified or variations of these trails include:

- **Black River Trail** between Copeland Park and Riverside Park;
- **Goose Island Trail** between Marion Road and County Road GI;
- **Mormon Creek Trail** between Highway 35 and Highway 61; and
- **North Bank Trail** between Monitor Street and Copeland Avenue;
- **Northside Connector** between Livingston Street and the Oak Street Connector Bridge;
- Completion of the **Rabbit Trail** in the La Crosse River Marsh.

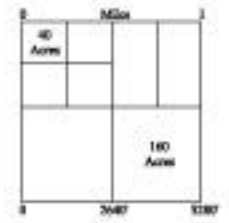
A number of these proposed facilities are shown on Figure 7-2.

Figure 7-2

Trail System



- Municipal Boundary
- City of La Crosse
- Water
- Railroads
- Roads
- Existing Bike Routes
- Proposed Bike Facilities
- Existing Bike / Hike Trail
- Proposed Bike / Hike Trail



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2. **Bicycle Racks.** To reduce bicycle theft, the City shall phase in frame supporting bike racks such as the inverted “U” or horseshoe type rack, while traditional wheel supporting racks shall be phased out.



Frame supporting bike rack

3. **Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.** The City shall continue to work towards implementation of the recommendations laid out in the Bicycle and Pedestrian element of the La Crosse Area Planning Committee Long Range Plan regarding placement and usage of signage, prioritization of projects, on-street facilities, etc.

Objective 6: Cooperative Relationships. Maintain and enhance the cooperative relationships that exist between the City and various other entities to coordinate facility development use and programming.

The Park and Recreation Department has an excellent working relationship with many other City departments, as well as the universities and other area entities. The Park and Recreation Department should continue to work with other City departments to determine future areas of growth and proactively acquire properties to serve the needs of current and new residents. They should also continue efforts to provide parks and open spaces in coordination with other public, semi-public, and private organizations. A regional approach may be beneficial in addressing some City concerns, as well as help to potentially reduce duplications of services and maintain successful collaborative efforts.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Shared Facilities.** The City shall evaluate the potential for sharing public facilities in order to reduce potential duplications of service and to maximize the value of capital expenses. Public facilities often require significant financial investments, and in the case of schools, tend to be underused during the summer months. The Park and Recreation Department will continue to work with the School District of La Crosse, the La Crosse Public Library, the Boys and Girls Club, and other public and semi-public agencies in an effort to co-locate facilities whenever possible, in order to maximize use of the sites.
2. **Blufflands.** The City shall work with the Towns of Medary and Shelby to develop agreements about the future land use of the bluffs (see also Objective 11 Action 3). In addition, the City shall continue to work with the Mississippi Valley Conservancy to purchase threatened or ecologically valuable bluffland properties as they become available. As these properties are acquired, the City should work to establish connections between them, and also to other community resources such as Hixon Forest.

Objective 7: Sale of Land. Prohibit the sale of any existing parks or open space except under very specific conditions.

Because the City is essentially landlocked, it is very important to retain all existing parks and open space, except in unique situations.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Retain Parkland.** The City shall prohibit the sale of existing parks and open space unless:
 - a. The parkland is deemed to be of little value or does not serve resident needs and revenue from said sale will allow the creation of more park/open space land in areas where need is greater, or;
 - b. The parkland sale will allow better management and preservation of the site, such as in the case of transferring open space to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to receive payments in lieu of taxes and reduce maintenance costs.

In any case, prior to the sale of any City park land, a public hearing shall be held and all property owners within 300 feet of the parcel in question shall be notified.

New Park and Open Space Needs

As the City's population continues to grow, age and become more diverse and recreational trends continue to change, it is likely that the City will require more parks, open space, and recreational facilities to meet changing needs. It will be important for the City to be able to identify these changes as they occur in order to provide the best park and recreation facilities and services possible.

Objective 8: Meet Changing Needs. Analyze changing demographics and recreational trends on a regular basis in order to make timely changes to the park and open space system to meet changing community needs.

The park, open space, and recreation system must be routinely analyzed in order to ensure provision of appropriate programs and facilities. Regular analysis will allow the City to adjust to changing recreational trends and demographics in a timely manner. This analysis will also help the City develop appropriate Level of Service (LOS) guidelines based on National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommendations (see Appendix A). Combining LOS guidelines with NRPA Park and Pathway Guidelines will help to provide estimates of the types and number of facilities that should be provided to serve particular areas or functions. Using an analytical approach to determine community needs will also

help to ensure that items entered into the capital budget are supported by process and a certain level of rationale.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Needs/Demands Analysis.** The City Parks and Recreation Department shall use analytical tools such as needs/demands analysis, level of service calculations, and demographic data to forecast future needs of the park and open space system, and to evaluate service to the community. These procedures should be conducted on a regular basis (every 3-5 years). The steps in calculating the level of service standard are listed below:
 - a. Determine the Park Classifications for which the LOS will apply.
 - b. Determine the Recreation Activity Menu (RAM) for each park classification. The RAM is the list of all recreation facilities, i.e., tennis courts, tot lots, picnic units, etc. which go into each park classification and for which a specific amount of space will be needed. The RAM determines the facilities space requirement of the LOS formula.
 - c. Determine Open Space Size Standards for each park classification for which LOS standards will apply.
 - d. Determine the present supply of these recreation activity choices.
 - e. Determine total Expressed Demand for these recreation activity choices.
 - f. Determine the Minimum Population Service Requirements for these recreation activity choices.
 - g. Determine the individual LOS for each park class.
 - h. Determine the collective LOS for the entire park and recreation system.

A more detailed explanation of how to conduct level of service calculations can be found in *Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines*, Mertes and Hall. 1996.

Objective 9: New Park and Open Space Development. Ensure that provisions are made for new parks and/or open space to adequately serve new development or new recreational needs.

Acquire sites and develop facilities where growth creates a need for additional parks and open space. New development and the increase in population that results can create a burden on existing parks and open spaces. To the extent possible, new park facilities should be identified in anticipation of, and provided in response to new development. This will allow the needs of the City’s residents to be met in a timely manner, while minimizing the impact of new development and increased populations on the existing park and open space system. Tools such as required land dedication and impact fees shall be used to assist in the acquisition of new park and open space facilities.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Identify Future Park Sites.** The City shall continue to identify sites that should be acquired for new parks and open space. The City has identified areas of potential

growth in the outlying areas (see Land Use plan element and map). Within these potential growth areas, sites should be acquired for parks and open space prior to, or in coordination with development proposals. Proactive designation and acquisition of park and open space land will help to frame development and minimize inflation of land values. Properties should also be identified in the City’s extraterritorial areas in anticipation of annexation. This includes sites for parks and open space in the Towns of Shelby, Campbell, and Medary.

Potential future park sites or search areas are identified on Figure 7.1. Where stormwater issues are present, the City should evaluate the development of parks in conjunction with construction of retention ponds. Potential sites for this include the proposed Baier Nursery development.

2. Land Dedications. The City shall continue to require parkland dedication (for both active and passive recreation) in conjunction with new development (generally residential in nature) in order to meet the needs of an increasing population and to prevent the overuse of existing facilities. Following the calculation of new Level of Service guidelines, the City shall revise its land dedication requirements. Current regulations require developers to dedicate one acre of land per 35 proposed dwelling units, or \$50 for each possible dwelling unit, 60% of which is to be given to the School District, and 40% of which is to be given to the Parks Department. New dedication criteria should give priority to:

- a. Usable parklands rather than simply dedicating lands too steep or wet to be developed; and
- b. Land that will enlarge existing parks and/or create connections between parks

Criteria shall also be developed relative to the number of dwelling units or acres being developed and how well the new development is served by existing park facilities. Separate criteria may need to be developed for multi-family development sites.

3. Site Conversions. The City shall explore opportunities to create parks and green space in developed areas of the City by converting vacant lots and/or property that is currently developed into parks, open space, or community gardens. Properties will be evaluated on a case-specific basis to determine if a park, open space, or community garden is appropriate and would enhance the surrounding area. An example of a recently created park is South Goose Green Park, which came out of a recommendation in the Lower North Side Neighborhood Plan.



New park adjacent to Goose Green completed in cooperation with the Lower North Side and Depot Neighborhood Association and the City of La Crosse Parks Department

Objective 10: Special Park Facilities. Evaluate possibilities for new facilities, especially athletic complexes and concession facilities, in order to address deficiencies within the park and open space system.

The La Crosse Park and Recreation Department currently maintains roughly 580 acres in athletic fields, as well as multiple tennis courts, basketball courts, and other athletic facilities. However, athletic facilities, and in particular the lack of sports complexes, have been identified as a shortfall of the current park and open space system. Other facilities that have been identified as scarce include a community recreation/aquatic center, and additional dog parks, among others.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Athletic Complex.** The City shall continue to research the possibility of constructing an athletic complex facility (or individual softball/baseball or soccer complexes). The City of La Crosse currently has no large athletic complex. This situation is compounded by the lack of available developable land within the City. A soccer complex has been planned for West Copeland Park, which might alleviate some of the need for soccer fields, and fields have also been planned on Isle La Plume. However, no similar baseball/softball complexes have been planned. Complexes allow easier maintenance, and also create the opportunity for tournaments to be held more easily. Several potential complex sites have been identified on the park facilities map (Figure 7-1).
2. **Neighborhood Athletic Facilities.** The City shall work to maintain and continue to utilize neighborhood level athletic facilities as much as possible. These facilities, while perhaps being ill suited to large-scale use, provide valuable access for those with limited mobility (especially children and the elderly).
3. **Community Recreation/Aquatic Center.** The City shall continue to evaluate the need for, and possible locations of, a large-scale community recreation and/or aquatic center. The City should also investigate shared use agreements to allow more community use of university facilities.
4. **Myrick Park Zoo Master Plan.** The City shall continue to work towards the implementation of the Myrick Park Zoo Master Plan. This includes the recommendation of the creation of the La Crosse EcoPark.
5. **Dog Parks.** The City shall continue to evaluate opportunities for the creation of additional dog parks and/or the expansion of existing dog parks.
6. **Concessions.** The City shall evaluate opportunities for the construction of a permanent concession facility in Riverside Park or other parks. Any facility that is designed must be done in such a manner that it is complementary to the history and significance of the park. For example, any new structure to be added to Riverside Park should be in the same character as the park gazebo and La Crosse Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau Building. Care would also need to be taken to address floodplain issues when siting this

facility. If it is determined that a concessions facility is needed, the City should evaluate opportunities to operate the facility as publicly owned and privately leased.

Greenways, Paths, and Trails

Nearly 100 years ago John Nolen proposed a series of interconnected greenways, paths, trails, and boulevards in his plan for the City’s park system. While some of these facilities were developed, many were not. Nolen’s plan provided for greenways on alignments that would be roughly consistent with Losey Boulevard/Highway 16, George Street, Copeland Avenue, Main Street, Cass Street, and Jackson Street. The drafting of this plan presents the opportunity to identify opportunities to expand upon this network. Development of this network will likely occur incrementally over a significant period of time, and will require significant expenditures. This network will improve access to parks and other unique features throughout the City. It will also enhance the overall appearance and livability of the La Crosse.

Objective 11: Connected Park System. Improve connections between the City’s waterfront, parks, open space areas, trails, and other places of significant interest to the community.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Park Links.** The City shall identify and develop linkages that will enhance access and better connect the City’s parks, riverfront, bluff, and other areas of interest. A priority should be to acquire those sites where the failure to act in the near future will preclude other future opportunities. As opportunities arise (e.g., road construction projects), the City should work to acquire parcels, or public access easements to further develop these linkages.



Off-road bike path along highway

- 2. Bike/Pedestrian Corridors.** The City shall continue to seek federal enhancement money for the purpose of developing additional bicycle and pedestrian corridors throughout the City. (See Figure 7-2)

3. Bluff Acquisition/Preservation. The City shall continue its efforts, in conjunction with the Mississippi Valley Conservancy, to proactively acquire property on the bluff along the eastern side of the City between Highway B and Highway 14/61 (see also Objective 6 Action 2). Funding shall be included in the capital budget until completion of this project. Lands acquired through this program will be used for interpretive and educational trails, biking, hiking, and will also provide a significant amount of open space for residents of the City and entire Coulee Region. The City should also work with the County and State to obtain additional funding for land acquisition and management. The City should also seek grant monies from other sources, such as private non-profit groups.

Funding priority should be given to properties that:

- Are threatened by development;
- Contain ecologically significant attributes;
- Cannot be protected by other means; or
- Where public access is a priority.

4. River Corridor Greenways. The City shall continue to acquire riverfront property for the purpose of creating a greenway system that links the parks along the waterfront to each other (see also Objective 4). There are currently a number of parks located on the shores of the Black and Mississippi Rivers, including the Black River Beach, Copeland Park, Riverside Park, and Houska Park. In addition, most of the area immediately surrounding the La Crosse River within the City is open space.

Creating a network of greenways linking these parks and open spaces (La Crosse River Conservancy Project and La Crosse River Natural Area projects already underway) will help to protect fish and wildlife habitat, as well as provide natural drainage, stormwater reservoirs, and passive recreation areas. Possibilities also exist along Mormon Creek for a similar greenway. In addition to funding from the capital budget, the City should seek funding from public and private agencies to facilitate the purchase of property or establishment of public access easements.

Objective 12: Parkways. Create a network of parkways and boulevards on major arterial or collector roads to improve the City's overall appearance, calm traffic, and provide improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Parkways can make a city more attractive and pedestrian friendly. They should be designed to be well landscaped, include sidewalks, street trees, decorative lighting, and on-road or off-road bicycle paths. The purpose of the parkways/boulevards is to:

- Improve the overall appearance, identity, and quality of life of the community.
- Increase and sustain property values.
- Create bicyclist and pedestrian linkages between the various neighborhoods, districts, greenways, and parks.

- Create visual community entry statements.
- Create an aura of stateliness when approaching important locations such as Historic Downtown La Crosse.
- Calm traffic speeds, especially in residential neighborhoods.
- Promote annexation of land by demonstrating the City’s commitment to investing in high quality public facilities.

Development of a parkway system should be seen as a high priority action that can take place in conjunction with street reconstruction and utility work. As such, it will need to be carried out over a long time frame (20 plus years), and would involve significant public expenditures. Further discussion of parkways is provided in the Urban Design plan element.

Policies/Actions:

1. Parkway/Boulevard Identification. The City shall consider creation of parkways in conjunction with reconstruction of certain streets as identified below. There are a number of streets that have the potential to be converted into parkways. Parkway/boulevard conversion should be prioritized, and work should be carried out incrementally in concurrence with road or utility projects. Areas with waterfront parks, public schools, or scenic attributes should receive priority for the parkway program. Potential parkway/boulevards are shown on Figure 7-3 and include:

North-South

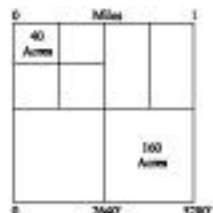
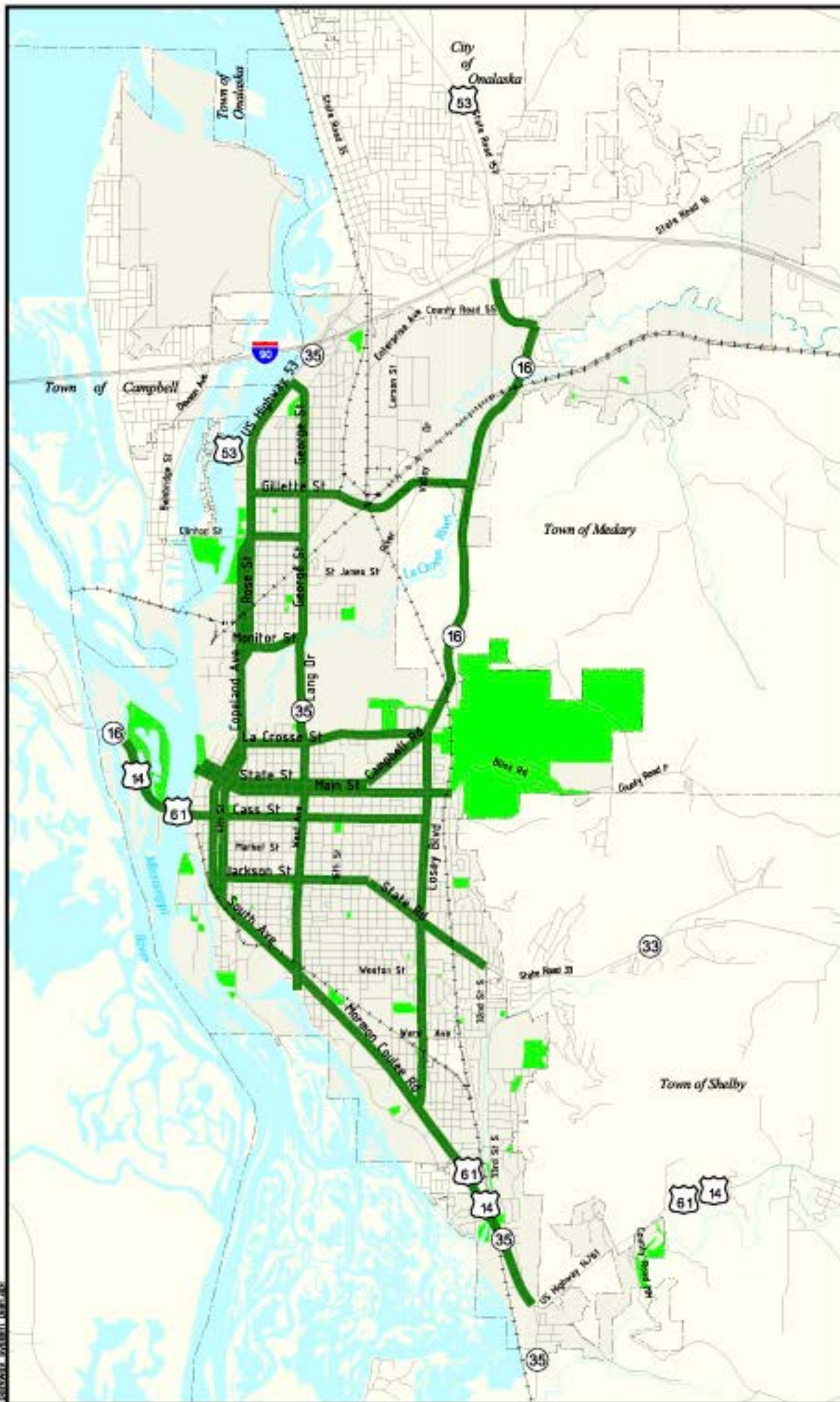
- Highway 53 (Copeland Avenue/Rose Street/3rd Street/4th Street)
- Highway 35 (George Street/Lang Drive/West Avenue/South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road)
- Losey Boulevard/Highway 16

East-West

- Gillette Street
- Clinton Street
- Monitor Street
- La Crosse Street
- State Street
- Campbell Road (possible demonstration project)
- Main Street
- Cass Street
- Jackson Street/State Road

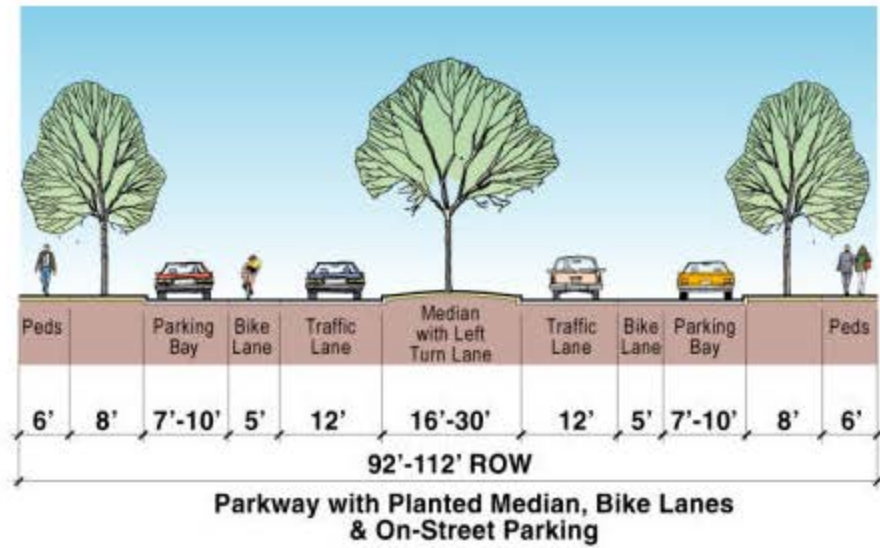
**Figure 7-3
Parkway
System
Plan**

-  Municipal Boundary
-  City of La Crosse
-  Water
-  Railroads
-  Roads
-  Parkway
-  Existing Parks



**City of
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*Comprehensive
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Prototypical Parkway Cross Section



Implementation

This section describes the major actions involved in implementing the Park and Open Space plan element. The table is intended to guide City staff and the Common Council in setting priorities for capital budgeting and staff allocation. It is expected that this table will be reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, to establish new priorities.

Some of the highest priorities regarding the park and open space system relate to maintenance of existing facilities, identification of needs and demands and performing level of service calculations. Actions requiring public funding should be prioritized by the Park Board prior to incorporation into the City’s capital budget. Incorporating these actions into the capital budget will allow the City to dedicate money for projects and allow the Park Board to annually prioritize their projects.

Priority ranking is defined as follows:

- 1 = highest or short-term priority
- 2 = secondary or mid-term priority
- 3 = lowest priority or represents on-going activities

Table 7-2: Implementation Actions for the Park and Open Space Plan

Priority	Actions	Responsible Agency
1	Bluff Acquisition/Preservation. Continue to work proactively to acquire property on the bluff between Highway B and Highway 14/61.	Planning Department Parks Department Plan Commission Park Board Common Council Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Conservation groups
1	River Corridor Greenways. Continue to acquire riverfront property to create a greenway system that links parks along the waterfronts.	Planning Department Parks Department Plan Commission Park Board Common Council
1	Park-a-Year Program. Designate one or more parks per year for major upgrades.	Planning Department Parks Department Park Board Common Council
1	Needs/Demand Analysis. Conduct a needs/demand analysis, level of service calculations, and other analysis to forecast future park, open space, and recreation needs.	Planning Department Parks Department Park Board

Priority	Actions	Responsible Agency
2	Revise Park Dedication Requirements. Revise the City’s parkland dedication requirements and establish criteria to evaluate park dedication proposals.	Planning Department Parks Department Plan Commission Park Board Common Council
2	Athletic Complex. Continue to research potential sites for an athletic complex or individual softball/baseball or soccer complexes.	Planning Department Parks Department Plan Commission Park Board Common Council
3	General Maintenance. Continue to take steps to improve maintenance of existing park facilities, particularly with regard to: fencing, athletic fields, and weed control.	Parks Department
3	Park Security. The Parks and Police Departments will continue to work together to identify and address safety issues, both real and perceived.	Parks Department Police Department
3	Parkway System. Consider, on an on-going basis, converting select streets into parkway/boulevards in conjunction with street reconstruction or utility projects. Priority should be given to streets identified on Figure 7-3.	Planning Department Public Works Department Parks Department Plan Commission Park Board Common Council
3	Pedestrian and Bicyclist Corridors. Continue to identify and seek federal funding for development of additional bicycle and pedestrian corridors.	Planning Department Public Works Department Parks Department

WDNR Grant Priorities

In addition to the actions listed in Table 7-2, the City will want to consider the priorities identified by other agencies. For the purposes of WDNR grant eligibility, the following proposed projects have been listed by priority:

1. Bluffland preservation program;
2. Park-a-year initiative;
3. Riverside Park/Mobil Oil redevelopment site park development;
4. Black River trail construction;
5. North Bank (La Crosse River) trail acquisition and construction;

6. Green Island bridge;
7. Isle La Plume Bridge;
8. Miscellaneous trail completions (pave unpaved portion of Rabbit Trail);
9. Implement recommended activities of La Crosse River Valley Study (wildlife viewing blinds, canoe launches, etc.);
10. Soccer field development (West Copeland Park, Isle La Plume);
11. Connection of Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park to State Road School;
12. Planted median construction (La Crosse Street, Main Street, Highway 35, Highway 53, etc.);
13. Mormon Creek corridor preservation and trail;
14. French Island park creation;
15. Creation of extraterritorial parks prior to development;
16. Goose Island trail construction;

Appendix A:

Parks and Pathways Classification and Guidelines of the National Recreation and Parks Association

Classifications	General Description	Location and Service Area Guidelines	Size Guideline
Parks Classifications			
Mini-Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs of a limited population.	Less than a ¼ mile distance in residential setting Serves predominantly residential areas within ¼ mile.	Between 2500 sq. ft. and one acre in size
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood park remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	¼ to ½ mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	Typically at least 3 acres or city block minimum size. 5 to 10 acres is optimal
School-Park	Depending on circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex, and special use. Often includes playground or active recreational facilities.	Determined by location of school district property.	Variable – Depends on function.
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based active and passive recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods within ½ to 3 mile distance.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres.
Large Urban Park	Large urban parks serve a broader purpose than community parks and are used when community and neighborhood parks are not adequate to serve the needs of the community. Focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves the entire community.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually a minimum of 50 acres, with 75 or more acres being optimal.
Natural Resource Areas	Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering.	Resource availability and opportunity. Usually serves entire community.	Variable.
Greenways	Generally linear. Serve to tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment.	Resource availability and opportunity. May also include specially designed roadways as greenways.	Variable.
Sports Complex	Consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities to larger and fewer sites strategically located throughout the community.	Determined by quality and suitability of site. Generally serves entire community and possibly the region.	Determined by projected demand. Usually a minimum of 25 acres, with 40 to 80 acres being optimal.
Special Use	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use such as a zoo or golf course.	Variable – dependent on specific use.	Variable
Private Park / Recreation Facility	Parks and recreation facilities that are privately owned yet contribute to the public park and recreation system.	Variable – dependent on specific use.	Variable

Confluence:

The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

8.0 Neighborhoods and Housing Plan Element

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Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND HOUSING ISSUES	1
NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT	2
NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING.....	2
NEIGHBORHOOD LIVABILITY	2
GUIDANCE FROM THE CONCEPT PLAN	3
OVERVIEW OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING PLAN.....	4
SUMMARY OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND HOUSING OBJECTIVES	5
Neighborhood Improvement.....	5
Housing	5
NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	6
NEIGHBORHOODS	6
HOUSING.....	20
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM.....	26

List of Figures

Figure 8-1 Existing Neighborhood Planning Areas	9
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List of Tables

Table 8-1: Implementation Program	26
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Neighborhoods and Housing Plan Element

Strong and healthy neighborhoods are the building blocks of cities. The City of La Crosse is fortunate because, for the most part, its neighborhoods are vibrant and healthy. A healthy, livable neighborhood can be defined as one consisting of quiet tree-lined streets, well-kept and attractive housing, neighborhood parks, schools, libraries, and convenient access to goods and services.

The City's goal is to make La Crosse's neighborhoods as attractive as possible so that people want to stay or move into the City. The objectives of this plan element are directed at making neighborhoods more desirable places to live, work, and play. The actions identify ways to rejuvenate declining neighborhoods, bolster at-risk neighborhoods, and create new, high-quality neighborhoods.

Summary of Neighborhood and Housing Issues

In general, the City of La Crosse has strong and vibrant residential neighborhoods. However, a few of the older neighborhoods have suffered because of a combination of the following factors:

- Zoning that allowed the construction or conversion of multiple-family housing on single-family blocks
- Lax enforcement of building, yard or parking regulations
- Excessive numbers of unrelated individuals (sometimes students) in housing units
- The nearby presence of unsightly businesses or industry
- Lack of design standards for new or remodeled buildings, especially multiple-family housing
- The aging of poorly constructed structures
- Owner disinvestment (especially by investor-owners)
- Growth in the proportion of housing units that are rented
- The exodus of middle-class homeowners to other neighborhoods or communities in the region
- Personal or property crimes
- Deteriorating streets, alleys and parks
- The loss of well-paying manufacturing jobs

Thus, the challenge before La Crosse is to boost confidence, private investment and livability in the older neighborhoods. The following issues were identified in the Issues and Conditions Report of *Confluence*.

Neighborhood Improvement

- What should the City do to improve neighborhood amenities?
- What should be done to improve neighborhoods to attract and retain residents?
- Should the City enact and enforce design regulations to ensure new infill housing is compatible with the existing housing in the neighborhood?
- What should the City do to address neighborhood decay and disinvestment?
- Can land use and zoning be configured to create a better mix of housing types and create more desirable neighborhoods?

Neighborhood Housing

- Why type of housing stock is needed to accommodate future demographic trends?
- What can the City do to retain younger families and higher income families who are moving to surrounding communities?
- How can the City create a more desirable marketplace for new homes of all price ranges?
- How can the City improve housing conditions?
- What is an appropriate balance between accommodating demand for rental units and providing adequate options for home ownership?
- Should rental properties be concentrated in certain neighborhoods or dispersed throughout the City?
- What incentives can the City provide to private sector developers and investors to encourage neighborhood infill and housing redevelopment?

Neighborhood Livability

- Should the City push for better distribution of social and public services countywide?
- How can the City improve the diversification of family incomes throughout its neighborhoods?
- How should the City address neighborhood crime?

Guidance from the Concept Plan

Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan is based on the Neighborhood Revitalization concept and relates directly to this Neighborhoods and Housing plan element. One of the overall Concept Plan goals is to improve existing neighborhoods and districts. Neighborhood revitalization is carried out through the following directions:

- Direct development and reinvestment to existing neighborhoods
- Lead redevelopment through City-sponsored action
- Increase densities in appropriate locations with adequate services and transit support
- Increase density by mixing residential and commercial land uses where appropriate
- Protect, restore and enhance natural and cultural resources that will improve quality of life

The Concept Plan also provided the following direction for the Neighborhoods and Housing plan element:

Infill and Rehabilitation: The City should emphasize infill development and rehabilitation of existing housing units. Design controls should be established and proactively enforced for new infill housing and rehabilitation projects.

Single Family Housing: The City should actively support and create incentives for housing rehabilitation in order to improve the quality and quantity of single-family homes in La Crosse.

Density: Housing density should increase in appropriate areas, without creating large concentrations of high-density dwellings.

Affordable Housing: The City should work with adjoining jurisdictions to develop a regional approach for meeting affordable housing needs.

Code Enforcement: The City should provide increased support and resources for code enforcement regarding property maintenance issues that affect many older buildings.



Overview of the Neighborhoods and Housing Plan

The actions described in this plan focus on neighborhood stewardship and renewal through attention and investment in the features that make neighborhoods strong. Through the rejuvenation of declining neighborhoods, the bolstering of at-risk neighborhoods, and the creation of quality new neighborhoods, the City will be better able to attract new residents, retain current residents and improve the quality of life for all.

Overall, many La Crosse neighborhoods contain good quality housing stock and offer a variety of amenities for their residents. These neighborhoods are a major asset to the city, and their health has a direct impact on the health of the larger community. This underscores the importance of focusing attention on City neighborhoods and the features that make them great.

The City has three types of neighborhoods, and each faces different challenge:

1. Older neighborhoods (pre-1940's)
2. "Middle-aged" neighborhoods (built 1940's to 1970's)
3. New neighborhoods (built since 1980)

Common features of strong neighborhoods include attractive, well-maintained housing, a high rate of home ownership, well-maintained parks and public open space, good public schools, and nearby amenities such as libraries, shops, and houses of worship. The degree to which neighborhoods exhibit these features varies.

The older-established and middle-aged neighborhoods have many of these elements. These neighborhoods were developed on grid-patterned streets including street trees, sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting, smaller lots, and homes with front porches and garages at the rear of the house.

New neighborhoods built within the last decade or two often reflect a suburban development pattern, where sidewalks are not always present and streets are overly wide. Suburban-style developments tend to be homogenous in terms of housing types and rarely include a mix of uses such as nearby commercial services. Residents are often drawn to new neighborhoods, however, because of the large lots and houses, the cleanliness or "newness" of the area, and the security of having neighbors with similar lifestyles and economic status. Because of our reliance on automobiles, the distance of new subdivisions from the urban core does not detract from their desirability. In fact, the opportunity to live in areas of lower density and congestion, close to natural or rural areas, is a major attraction of new fringe growth.

Summary of Neighborhood and Housing Objectives

Neighborhood Improvement

Objective 1: Improve Neighborhood Land Use Planning. Ensure compatible and proper land uses in all neighborhoods

Objective 2: Improve Architecture and Urban Design. Improve building and site design of new multiple-family housing and commercial development.

Objective 3: Improve Public Facilities and Services. Continually rebuild, renovate or improve streets, alleys, lighting, parks, street trees, snow plowing, trash removal, and other City facilities or services.

Objective 4: Foster Secure Neighborhoods. Reduce the level of crime, both real and perceived, and establish a reputation for La Crosse’s neighborhoods as crime free and peaceful, with a strong relationship between the police and neighborhood residents.

Objective 5: Use Heritage Preservation to Protect Neighborhoods. Encourage heritage preservation activity as a catalyst for overall housing and neighborhood revitalization.

Objective 6: Actively Market Neighborhoods. Promote the city’s neighborhoods and the ongoing revitalization and reinvestment efforts to attract a portion of future regional growth.

Objective 7: Improve Residents’ Sense of Community. Empower residents to cooperate for neighborhood improvement.

Objective 8: Enhance Citizen Input and Education. Use technology to facilitate public communication and to provide information about ordinance and services.

Housing

Objective 9: Housing Options. Establish a mix of housing options, sizes, prices, styles, and tenancy.

Objective 10: Increase Home Ownership. Foster the purchase of single-family and two-unit homes for owner-occupancy.

Objective 11: Improve Housing Maintenance and Quality. Continue to encourage proactive housing maintenance and code enforcement.

Objective 12: Populations with Special Needs. La Crosse should work with La Crosse County and other regional agencies to offer a variety of housing options for populations with special needs.

Neighborhoods and Housing Objectives and Actions

Neighborhoods

The City has a neighborhood planning process to address issues affecting specific neighborhoods. This process identifies the positive characteristics of established neighborhoods and addresses the effects of challenges presented by incompatible land uses, blighted properties or other concerns that can affect neighborhood livability and contribute to disinvestment. The objectives and actions throughout this plan element will be used in the neighborhood planning process.

The neighborhood improvement objectives and actions address City efforts to improve upon the physical aspects of neighborhoods. These strategies include public infrastructure improvements, enhanced land utilization techniques, the development of design standards for buildings and neighborhoods, increased reinvestment and improved City services, all of which will enhance the attractiveness of the neighborhoods.

A primary goal of this plan is to capture a major portion of the future population growth in the region. One important strategy to attract this growth will be to capitalize on the positive attributes of the City's established neighborhoods by enhancing their qualities to make them more competitive with new suburban development.

Objective 1: Improve Neighborhood Land Use Planning. Ensure compatible and proper land uses in all neighborhoods.

Improvements must be made to the social and economic environment in some older neighborhoods. The amount and location of older, inexpensive housing have had a direct impact on the economic map of the city. Large concentrations of lower income families exist in a few neighborhoods and developing methods to establish a more stratified economic profile will greatly assist in improving the quality of life.

Policies/Actions:

1. Implement Neighborhood Plans. The City of La Crosse Common Council has approved and adopted four neighborhood plans (see Figure 8-1). The first action item for the Neighborhood Element of the Comprehensive plan is that all neighborhood plans be implemented as adopted. To date, neighborhood plans have been completed for:

- Powell - Hood Park - Hamilton Neighborhood
- Lower North Side and Depot Neighborhood
- Goosetown - Campus Neighborhood
- Washburn Neighborhood

Each of these plans offer specific actions aimed at reinvestment and revitalization of their neighborhood. These plans should be consulted as actions in this and other plan elements of *Confluence* are implemented in these neighborhoods.

The City should continue to complete neighborhood plans and identify other neighborhoods with older housing stock that could benefit from plans to address housing preservation, renovation or replacement, as well as other neighborhood and livability issues. The neighborhoods identified for future neighborhood plans include:

- Two North La Crosse neighborhoods in the area between Clinton Street and Interstate-90
- The neighborhood east of Powell – Hood Park - Hamilton lying between Farnam and Green Bay streets (Holy Trinity area)
- The area south of Green Bay Street to the Mississippi River
- South Mormon Coulee Road.

- 2. Residential Redevelopment.** The City shall allocate local funds to the Redevelopment Authority for condemnation and acquisition of dilapidated properties in order to create desirable residential redevelopment sites. Local funds will be used to supplement federal government funding for housing rehabilitation and replacement in neighborhoods. For efficient planning, funds should be earmarked for a 10-20 year timeline.

The Redevelopment Authority will use its powers to acquire and consolidate properties to make them more attractive for redevelopment by private developers. City funding will be invested in housing options for mid-range and higher income families to provide a variety of housing levels in neighborhoods. Federal funds will continue to be used to offer housing rehabilitation and replacement for low- and moderate-income family housing options. If the City established a Community Development Corporation (CDC) as recommended later in this plan element, the efforts of a CDC will be coordinated with efforts of the Redevelopment Authority.

- 3. Redevelopment Plan.** The City shall develop a citywide residential redevelopment plan to guide the Redevelopment Authority to most efficiently use the funding available and to meet other community planning goals. The plan will identify objectives and methods for improving the quality of housing through the removal and replacement of substandard housing and should include estimated funding required by the Redevelopment Authority.

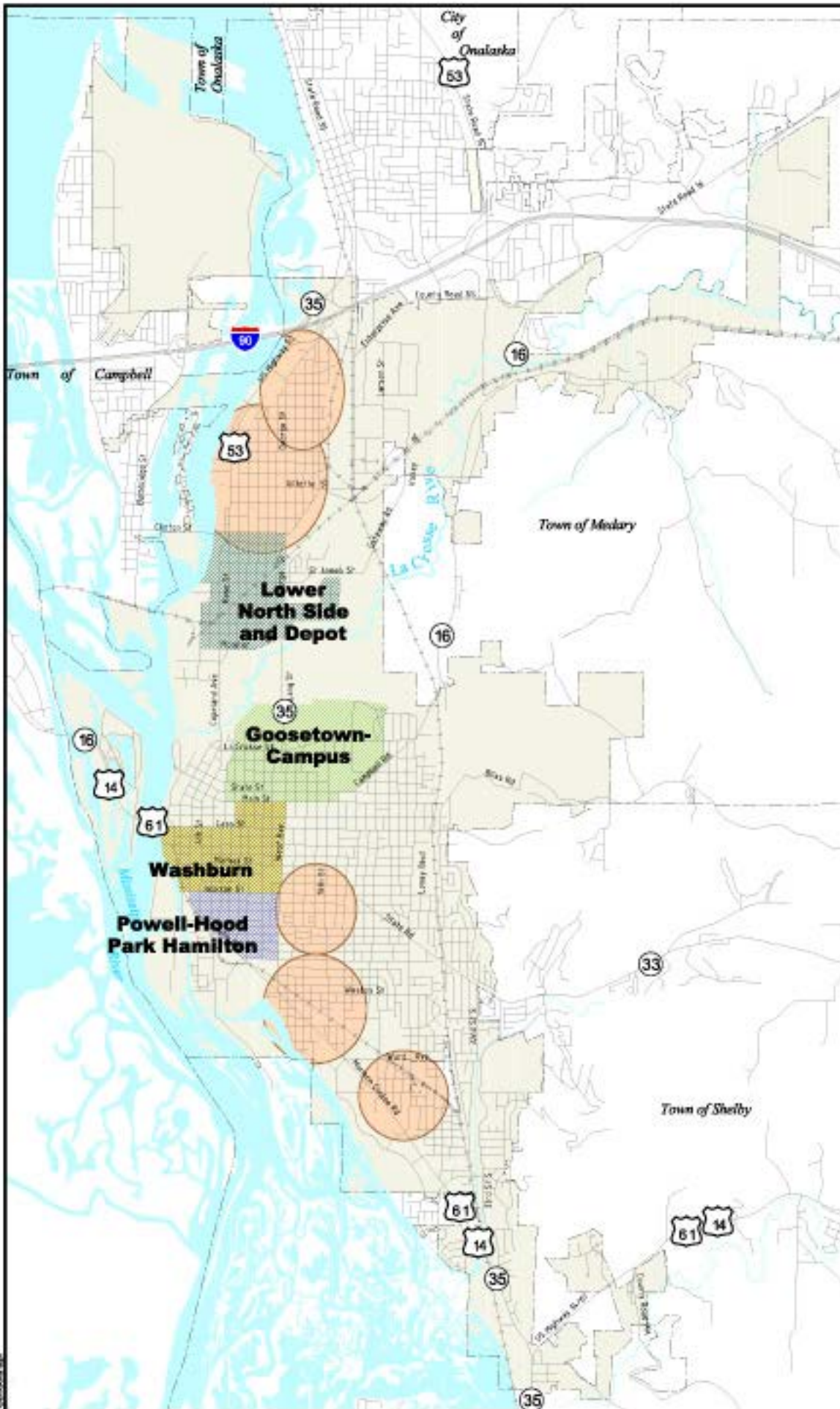
4. **Neighborhood Monitoring.** The City shall establish a systematic means to monitor middle-aged neighborhoods that were developed between 1940 and 1970 for early signs of deterioration, such as deferred maintenance, building deterioration, subdivision of single-family houses, or increased police calls. If these signs are identified, the City should target these areas for code enforcement, community policing, neighborhood plans or other means to readily address problems and curtail further deterioration and disinvestment.

5. **Institutional Growth Boundaries.** The City shall require the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse, Viterbo University, Western Wisconsin Technical College, Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center and Franciscan Skemp Medical Center to establish growth boundaries and master plans, which should be consistent with the requirements outlined in the Land Use and Development plan element. These boundaries and future growth plans should be adopted by ordinance to give them force and longevity.

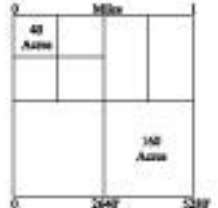


Franciscan – Skemp Medical Center

**Figure 8-1
Neighborhoods**



-  Municipal Boundary
-  City of La Crosse
-  Water
-  Railroad
-  Road
-  Existing Neighborhood Plans
-  Potential Neighborhood Plan Areas



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Objective 2: Improve Architecture and Urban Design. Improve building and site design of new multiple-family housing and commercial development.

From the use of inappropriate materials to the lack of orientation to the street, many newer buildings appear out of place within the context of the older, traditional residential neighborhood of La Crosse.

- 1. Design Guidelines for New and Infill Buildings.** The City shall adopt and enforce design guidelines to ensure that new and infill buildings, except single-family housing, the housing, reflect the styles and architectural characteristics of other housing and structures in the immediate neighborhood. The guidelines will cover building design, height, setback, materials and orientation to the street. (For more detailed descriptions of design guidelines see Appendix A in the Urban Design plan element.)



New housing with traditional design characteristics.



2. Traditional Neighborhood Design. The City shall encourage the continued application of traditional neighborhood design features in redevelopment in older neighborhoods and as appropriate in new neighborhood development.

- Urban-sized lots
- Interconnected streets
- Relatively narrow streets
- Sidewalks
- Street trees
- Neighborhood parks
- A diversity of housing types in the neighborhood
- Front porches
- Garages located in the rear or side of the house.



McHarley Development on South 32nd Street

3. Transit-Oriented Development. The City shall encourage through its land use plan and zoning ordinance relatively dense housing and mixed-use development Municipal Transit Utility (MTU) bus stops.

4. Parking Requirements. The City shall revise its parking requirements for all multiple family dwelling districts (R2 and above) to address parking issues related to student rental properties.

For example, a four-bedroom student rental may have four individuals, each with his own car while a four-bedroom family rental would most likely have one or two vehicles. The parking requirements should be rewritten to better manage the student property parking. When future usage cannot be determined, the more strict requirements shall be enforced.

5. Landscaping Standards. The City’s zoning code shall be revised to require higher quality planting plans for multiple-family housing, commercial sites and industry.

The City shall also study the feasibility of requiring retroactive landscaping to force apartment building owners to provide a minimum amount of landscaping to their properties. Utilizing the landscaping standards developed for new construction, existing rental properties with no landscaping would be required to meet the new construction requirements. To minimize costs for the owner, this may be accomplished in part by encouraging property owners to participate in the City’s boulevard tree planting program.

6. Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District. The City shall amend its zoning ordinance to establish more restrictive site planning and sign standards for businesses located near residential areas.

7. Vertically-Mixed Land Use. Identify and target specific areas in La Crosse to increase the amount of vertically mixed land uses. However, ensure that increased density or non-residential development is strongly regulated so as to protect nearby housing. Vertically mixed land uses offer efficiency in land use for a city with limited room for expansion.

The downtown, with an emerging residential component, should be one of the target areas for vertically-mixed land use. Traditionally, downtowns have been vertically-mixed with retail activities on lower floors of buildings and office and residential uses on upper floors. The same principles can apply in neighborhood commercial areas with multi-story buildings. The City shall take the following steps to encourage vertically-mixed redevelopment:



Mixed use building with offices and apartments above storefront shops.

- The City shall amend its zoning ordinance to better encourage vertically mixed land uses, and identify areas appropriate for this type of redevelopment (downtown, near the colleges and the hospitals, along major transportation and transit corridors and in other activity centers).
- The City shall provide incentives to owners who convert the upper floors of downtown buildings into living quarters. For various reasons, including lack of interest, many downtown properties are underutilized and their owners have not used upper floors for commercial or residential purposes. The City shall work with other municipalities to loosen state building code requirements that hamper the renovation

and re-use of upper-floor spaces. The City shall consider establishing a low-interest loan program to encourage use of upper floors.

Objective 3: Improve Public Facilities and Services. Continually rebuild, renovate or improve streets, alleys, lighting, parks, street trees, snow plowing, trash removal, and other City facilities or services.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Upgrade Services and Facilities.** In conjunction with other neighborhood reinvestment projects, the City shall upgrade public services and facilities particularly in its older neighborhoods. Upgrading public facilities will provide a comparative “newness” feeling, which is a large factor in the attractiveness of developments outside the City. These improvements include parks, alleys, street and alley lighting, street trees, sidewalks, snow plowing, curbside pick-up of recyclables, and other services.
2. **Use Parks and Natural Resources as Neighborhood Amenities.** The City shall continue to explore and support various programs and incentives to utilize parks and natural areas to enhance neighborhoods.
 - **Park-A-Year Initiative:** As described in the Parks and Open Space Plan, the City shall institute the Park-A-Year initiative to upgrade all of the City’s parks. This initiative will demonstrate proactive public investment to improve the appearance and safety of neighborhood parks, which should spur private reinvestment in these neighborhoods. When possible, the City should appropriate funding for improvements to more than one park a year (especially in areas where Federal Community Development Block Grant [CDBG] funds are available).
 - **Greenways:** The City shall support efforts to create greenway links with public open space, especially along rivers or creeks, around the La Crosse River Marsh and west of the bluffs. The City shall continue to seek outside funding support for these projects including state, federal or private grants. The City should also be proactive in acquiring rights-of-way for future projects and, where feasible, include these links in all reconstruction projects.



Promenade in Riverside Park

- **Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Resources:** The City must safeguard and improve its environmental resources as a means of promoting urban development, revitalization and improving the quality of life. The City is blessed with natural amenities that are a major reason why many residents choose to live in La Crosse.

Each of these environmental efforts would have the ancillary effect of acting as major attractor to future residents, and would spur additional reinvestment efforts in the city. In addition, the attractiveness of La Crosse as a place to live would assist in future business recruitment efforts.

- 3. Street System and Neighborhood Livability.** The City shall ensure that neighborhood streets continue to accommodate through movement of traffic while protecting the safety of residents. Techniques for maintaining traffic flow and neighborhood safety include traffic dispersion, offering options for routes by retaining a grid street system, and traffic calming.
- 4. Local Street Design.** The City shall install trees and sidewalks along all major streets and, possibly, decorative lighting. New and reconstructed streets shall include bicycle lanes, wide curb lanes, and shared use lanes where possible and recommended by the regional *Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan*.

- **Pedestrian Improvements:** The City shall require sidewalks to be installed along at least one side of all existing public streets and on both sides of all new and reconstructed streets. The City shall also become more assertive in including sidewalks throughout the City.



- **Bike Routes:** The City shall seek opportunities to enlarge its network of off-road paths and on-street lanes in coordination with new or rebuilt roads. As referenced in the Transportation and the Parks and Open Space plan elements, connections through the neighborhoods are important to implementing a functional bicycle transportation system. In addition, all local residential streets should be made bicyclist-friendly by being interconnected and narrow.

Objective 4: Foster Secure Neighborhoods. Reduce the level of crime, both real and perceived, and establish a reputation for La Crosse’s neighborhoods as crime free and peaceful, with a strong relationship between the police and neighborhood residents.

Real and perceived criminal activity is a major detraction from neighborhood reinvestment efforts. Addressing crime in neighborhoods is essential to foster neighborhood reinvestment.

Policies/Actions:

1. Police Patrols. The City shall strive to increase the levels of foot and bicycle patrols in the City’s higher crime areas. These patrols would be aimed at increasing the police presence in the neighborhood and establishing better relationships between residents and the Police Department. Increased police visibility and action in these areas will discourage future criminal activity and provide more immediate response times for crimes that may occur. In cooperation with these efforts, residents will be asked to become more involved through various police programs, such as Neighborhood Watch and Project Watch Dog.



Police Bicycle Patrols

2. Special Police Initiatives. The City shall continue to fund to the extent possible, the Police Department’s Project Crackdown efforts. A few of the City’s neighborhoods have a large percentage of properties with illegal uses, such as drug dealing. Often these properties are in neighborhoods with buildings in a deteriorated condition.

Project Crackdown is specifically aimed at keeping drug dealers from becoming established in La Crosse. The Police Department, working in conjunction with various agencies, residents, and enforcement personnel, gathers data on buildings suspected of being drug houses or of being used inappropriately. If the evidence warrants, an inspection is then ordered and a complete property inspection with all code enforcement personnel from various City departments is done. The property owner is then given a list of violations with a short time frame for compliance. This approach can result in significant declines in illegal activity.

3. Training Programs. The City shall seek other funding options to continue training programs aimed at empowering its citizens. Training programs, such as the Crime Free Multi-housing program, instructs property owners and tenants on how to address and prevent illegal activity on rental property. Well received by property owners, the program enables residents to participate in improving their buildings and extends the work being undertaken by police.

Objective 5: Use Heritage Preservation to Protect Neighborhoods. Encourage heritage preservation activity as a catalyst for overall housing and neighborhood revitalization.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Local Historic Designation.** The City shall work with the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to develop a City Historic Designation process and requirements for historic districts and properties in addition to the National Register designation. Local designation will offer greater protection than state and National Register designation and will provide for design review of changes to designated properties.
- 2. Historic Preservation Plans.** The City Planning Department and the La Crosse HPC shall develop preservation plans for the National Register Historic Districts (and/or local historic districts) that outline future preservation efforts, design review guidelines for the district, and guidelines for new building construction in the district.
- 3. Public Improvements.** The City shall encourage the historic renovation of homes by providing public improvements that will complement restoration efforts. The public improvements will act in a similar manner as downtown streetscaping efforts have. Initial efforts will be restricted to designated historic districts and may include period lighting and historic district signage.
- 4. Extension of Historic Qualities.** In conjunction with more stringent property maintenance enforcement, the City shall work to encourage continued quality restoration of properties outside of historic districts. The neighborhood historic districts will be used as a starting point for the physical revitalization of the City's neighborhoods. It is hoped that results in historic districts will reassure residents of adjacent neighborhoods that similar investments will bring positive results.

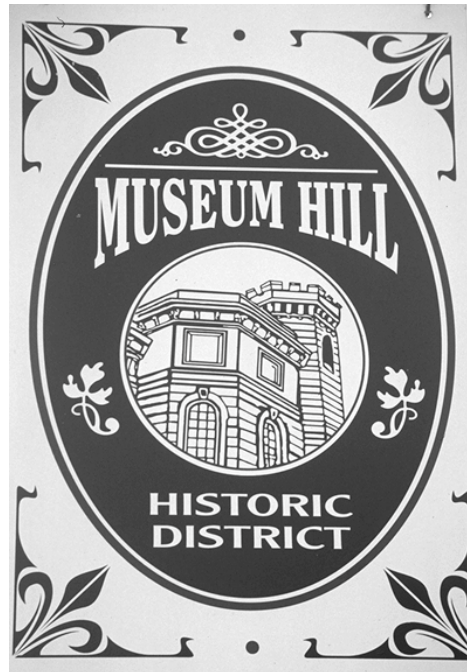


Lavery-Martindale House – one of La Crosse's majestic historic properties

Objective 6: Actively Market Neighborhoods. Promote the City's neighborhoods and the ongoing revitalization and reinvestment efforts to attract a portion of future regional growth.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Marketing Plan.** The City shall engage in neighborhood marketing plans to complement reinvestment efforts. The aim of such plans would be to attract new businesses and moderate- to higher-income residents. Marketing efforts should promote La Crosse's neighborhoods as beautiful, safe, and convenient places to live and work and focus on retaining and attracting people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds. Emphasis should be placed on the primary assets of neighborhoods such as location, neighborhood amenities and services.
- 2. Marketing Partnerships.** The City shall build marketing partnerships that target all media outlets throughout the region and surrounding states. Neighborhood marketing efforts should be done in conjunction with business recruitment efforts, La Crosse Realtors, La Crosse Area Convention and Visitors Bureau publications, and at La Crosse Center events.



Example of sign used in neighborhood identification and identity building

Objective 7: Improve Resident’s Sense of Community. Empower residents to cooperate for neighborhood improvement.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Neighborhood Organizations.** The City shall support and foster existing and organize new neighborhood organizations. Neighborhood organizations provide a framework for residents to get to know one another and build support for improving their neighborhoods and working together on shared goals. When neighborhood plans are developed, neighborhood organizations should be established to ensure that plans are implemented by residents, the City, or other agencies.

Neighborhood organizations also offer an important way for citizens to participate in decision making. An individual representing a neighborhood group at a Common Council meeting is often more effective than an individual speaking only on his own behalf. The creation of neighborhood organizations provides a means for citizens to develop a stronger voice in civic affairs.



Active citizen participation

- 2. Neighborhood Identities.** The City shall encourage neighborhoods to establish identities and create neighborhood events that will enhance residents’ sense of belonging to the community. Because of the high level of transient residents in the city, these neighborhood efforts will require yearly recruiting efforts by permanent residents. The end goal is to establish communication between neighbors that will lead towards more responsible and conscientious behavior on the part of all residents.

The City shall provide the initial impetus for neighborhood scale events by developing a citywide program that concentrates on neighbor interaction. The effort should be aimed at physical improvements that provide a sense of accomplishment but are not difficult to organize or complete. Possibilities include litter control projects in which neighbors adopt a block and work together to keep the block clean, and neighborhood workdays for landscape improvements, such as flowers, in small public open spaces.

- 3. Cultural Diversity.** La Crosse’s neighborhoods are blessed with great cultural diversity. The City shall strive to educate all residents about this diversity and foster better understanding between neighbors. Cultural diversity should be used as a strength for the future of La Crosse.

Objective 8: Enhance Citizen Input and Education. Use technology to facilitate public communication and to provide information about ordinances and services.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Information.** The City shall better utilize the Internet to distribute information and educate citizens, council members, news media, and other interested parties on all services, committees, meetings, projects and other issues covered by the City of La Crosse and its employees.
2. **Publicity about City Services.** The City shall develop a brochure program and utilize City billing, such as the quarterly water bills, to distribute brochures containing information on City services, programs, meetings, projects and other relevant information.



Housing

The primary focus and goal of *Confluence* is neighborhood revitalization. In order to achieve that goal, effort should be focused on encouraging reinvestment in existing housing and designing new housing well.

New housing starts in La Crosse have slowed since the 1960s so that middle- and upper-income buyers have fewer options in this city. Concurrently, renter-occupied housing units have soared to over 50 percent of the total. Too many single-family houses near the colleges have been converted to apartment buildings, creating overcrowding, excessive parking, accelerated deterioration, lack of maintenance, noise, trash, crime, vandalism and other ills. These forces have tended to push middle-class family homeowners out of La Crosse, accelerating the downward spiral of blight and disinvestment.

The major neighborhood housing issues to address include:

1. The age of the housing stock
2. Maintenance of the housing stock
3. The high percentage of rental properties.

Objective 9: Housing Options. Establish a mix of housing options, sizes, prices, styles, and tenancy.

Providing a mix of housing choices is essential to meet the needs of persons at all income levels, all ages and persons with special needs. These needs can be met through a variety of housing types, including both owner-occupied and rental units.

- 1. Establish Renter/Owner Balance.** The City shall work to establish a balance between owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing. In neighborhoods with predominantly single-family housing stock, owner occupancy is frequently a strong indicator of neighborhood stability. While recognizing the need to provide a mix of housing options, the City will work to increase the number of owner-occupied housing units, aiming for a 40/60 percentage breakdown of renters to owners by 2010.

The City shall utilize a variety of methods to increase the level of home ownership in the City, including:

- Converting former single-family dwellings from rental duplexes and triplexes back to owner-occupied units
- CDC initiatives
- Community Action Program (CAP) home ownership programs
- The Fair Housing Coalition.

- 2. Balance HOME Funding.** The City shall examine the cost effectiveness of using federal funds to develop multiple family properties versus single family properties.

The City shall strive to increase the amount of affordable housing in apartment developments while still providing affordable single family housing options. Private developments and housing utilizing federal funding sources will be encouraged over public housing developments.

- 3. WHEDA Affordable Housing Tax Credits (WHEDA).** The City shall utilize the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) Affordable Housing Tax Credit program to supplement rehabilitation and new construction costs for vacant buildings and eventually rental costs for low- and moderate-income families.

Upper-floor apartments in downtown buildings and lofts in warehouses are in high demand in other cities. An example in La Crosse would be the former Machine Products building on Second Street, which could be rehabilitated into apartment housing that would include a percentage of units for low to moderate income families.

- 4. Community Development Corporation.** The City shall establish a CDC to spearhead a cooperative reinvestment in the city's neighborhoods with funds secured from government, institutions, private businesses, and foundations.

5. **High-Density Housing.** The City shall encourage high-density developments in appropriate locations such as near colleges, hospitals, downtown, and along transit corridors. However, higher densities should not be allowed in the midst of blocks of single-family housing. Rather, higher density housing should be located near intersections at the ends of blocks.
6. **Expand Housing Options.** When implementing housing revitalization strategies, the City shall work toward establishing additional housing options in the city.

Traditional townhouse and brownstone style apartments could attract a niche market desiring more upscale housing at moderate to higher level costs. Depending on location and the quality of construction, these types of housing units could attract persons of moderate to higher income levels to older neighborhoods. These reinvestments would help to stabilize and enhance property values and encourage other investment in the neighborhood, which could in turn improve the vitality of the downtown and other neighborhood business areas. By providing options similar to or better than those that exist in the surrounding towns or cities, the City can encourage middle and higher income residents to invest in central city neighborhoods.

Objective 10: Increase Home Ownership. Foster the purchase of single-family and two-unit homes for owner-occupancy.

Increasing homeownership can lead to better-maintained properties while helping to retain the character of a neighborhood. To do this the City must utilize a variety of programs to assist purchasers as well as rehabilitation efforts.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Homebuyer Incentives.** The City shall continue to identify and advertise existing homebuyer incentives, and develop new incentives through public-private partnerships. The City shall also establish a local fund, through public and private donations, to be utilized for market rate loans, down payment assistance, and housing rehabilitation. For implementation purposes the local fund will adhere to regulations developed specifically for encouraging homeownership, and designed to offer incentives to those who may not qualify for federal money due to restrictions in the federal regulations.
2. **Homeownership Programs.** The City shall become more proactive and expand marketing efforts for existing home ownership programs.

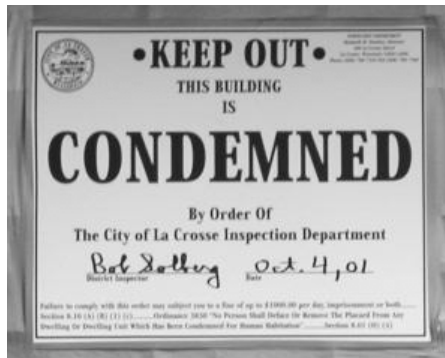
Since Federal funding supports the Housing Replacement Program, the City shall seek state and local funding sources to expand and supplement the program. The City should also continue to couple with the CAP HomeBuyer Program to provide incentives for home ownership.

- 3. Residential Mortgage Payment Assistance.** The City shall develop a financial incentive program to encourage the purchase and renovation or removal of marginal properties. An integral part of this incentive program will be private funding mechanisms for mortgage payment assistance. The assistance program would be designed to supplement mortgage payments where necessary and freeze current assessments on property for a designated time period if the property owner agrees to rehabilitate the existing property or construct new housing units. The assessment rates would then increase gradually to allow a recuperation of taxes by the City over time.

Objective 11: Improve Housing Maintenance and Quality. Continue to encourage proactive housing maintenance and general code enforcement.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Code Enforcement.** The City shall create a formal Restore Everybody’s Neighborhood Effectively and Win (RENEW) team to build upon the early efforts of the RENEW program and develop an enforcement strategy comprised of comprehensive inspection efforts aimed at removing blighted properties and reducing crime. The team will be comprised of key City department personnel including Inspections, Planning, Public Works, Police, Fire, Assessors and the Mayor’s office, along with additional community partners.



Blighted properties are identified and tagged by the City’s Inspections Department

- 2. Code Violation Reports.** The City shall continue to conduct yearly audits of the number of complaints and compliance levels conducted to assess the level of inspection that occurs. A year-end report summarizing the most frequent complaints, problem areas, and problem property owners will be compiled and reported to the Common Council and the public, in an effort to better inform and educate residents about the most frequently occurring ordinance violations and how to avoid them.

3. **Code Enforcement Staff.** The City shall encourage continued changes and stronger actions towards code enforcement. The City should add code enforcement staff, when possible, in an effort to increase the levels of compliance.
4. **Rental Property Maintenance Codes.** The City shall improve enforcement of property maintenance codes for apartment buildings through a rental unit inspection program and other regulations as is done with the tavern industry, the food industry, and other businesses. The regulations will focus on property maintenance, minimum standards for safety, cleanliness, Americans with Disabilities Act conformity, and affordability. This regulation may be accomplished (1) through a rental inspection program or (2) through ordinance changes.

Objective 12: Develop Housing for People with Special Needs. La Crosse should work with La Crosse County and other regional agencies to offer a variety of housing options for populations with special needs.

While La Crosse will continue to provide an appropriate regional share of such housing, persons with special needs also benefit from housing options and residential choices. Populations with special needs include Section 8 voucher program participants, persons requiring various community living arrangements, people in assisted living facilities, and the homeless population.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Countywide Distribution.** The City shall develop an inventory of all special population housing facilities in the county and calculate the ratio of group homes per capita. The City shall identify those group homes that are dependent on services offered in La Crosse and not available elsewhere in the County. Social service facilities that rely on services such as hospital care should remain in proximity to those facilities. Other services that are not dependent on City services or facilities should be distributed more evenly throughout the County to balance the needs of these facilities as well as provide choices for residents.

The City shall also assist the appropriate state and federal government agencies by identifying appropriate locations for subsidized housing to minimize concentrations in the City. This will be a proactive policy to better plan locations to match services and needs, rather than reacting to placement after decisions have been made.

2. **Group Homes.** The City shall examine the distribution of group homes for those guilty of serious crimes and homes serving as halfway houses for people transitioning from prison to society. The City shall again seek and support all efforts at evenly distributing these homes throughout the county.
3. **Section 8 Vouchers.** The City Housing Authority has 173 units of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 8 housing and new construction housing units

in two facilities. The City shall determine the Countywide number of persons utilizing Section 8 vouchers and seek a representative distribution throughout the county based on population and to provide adequate housing choices.

4. Homeless Population Assistance. The City shall continue to work with the CDBG program and the County to provide a continuum of care that assists homeless persons in moving from homeless status to basic skills training and eventually employment and self-sustenance. Goals of the CDBG program that will be implemented with assistance from the City and the County include:

- Provide four more units of emergency shelter by 2003
- Provide 10 units of transitional housing by 2004
- Provide transitional assistance; basic skills, medical, educational, or special needs.

5. Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Fees. The City shall ask all non-profit facilities to pay a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) fee. In addition, the City shall encourage the development of private, for-profit assisted living centers as a means of ensuring that the City is able to continue to provide services to all residents.

There are currently 19 publicly assisted housing facilities in La Crosse administered by the City Housing Authority or provided through federal, state and local programs. Although two facilities are for-profit entities and pay City taxes and another facility pays a PILOT fee, the City must still provide services to all facilities.



Bethany Lutheran Homes on Cass Street

Implementation Program

The preceding Objectives and Actions are the guiding policy statements and actions for the next 5 to 20 years. Some of the items deal with short-term actions while others are aimed at long range improvements that may not be visible until 10 to 20 years have passed.

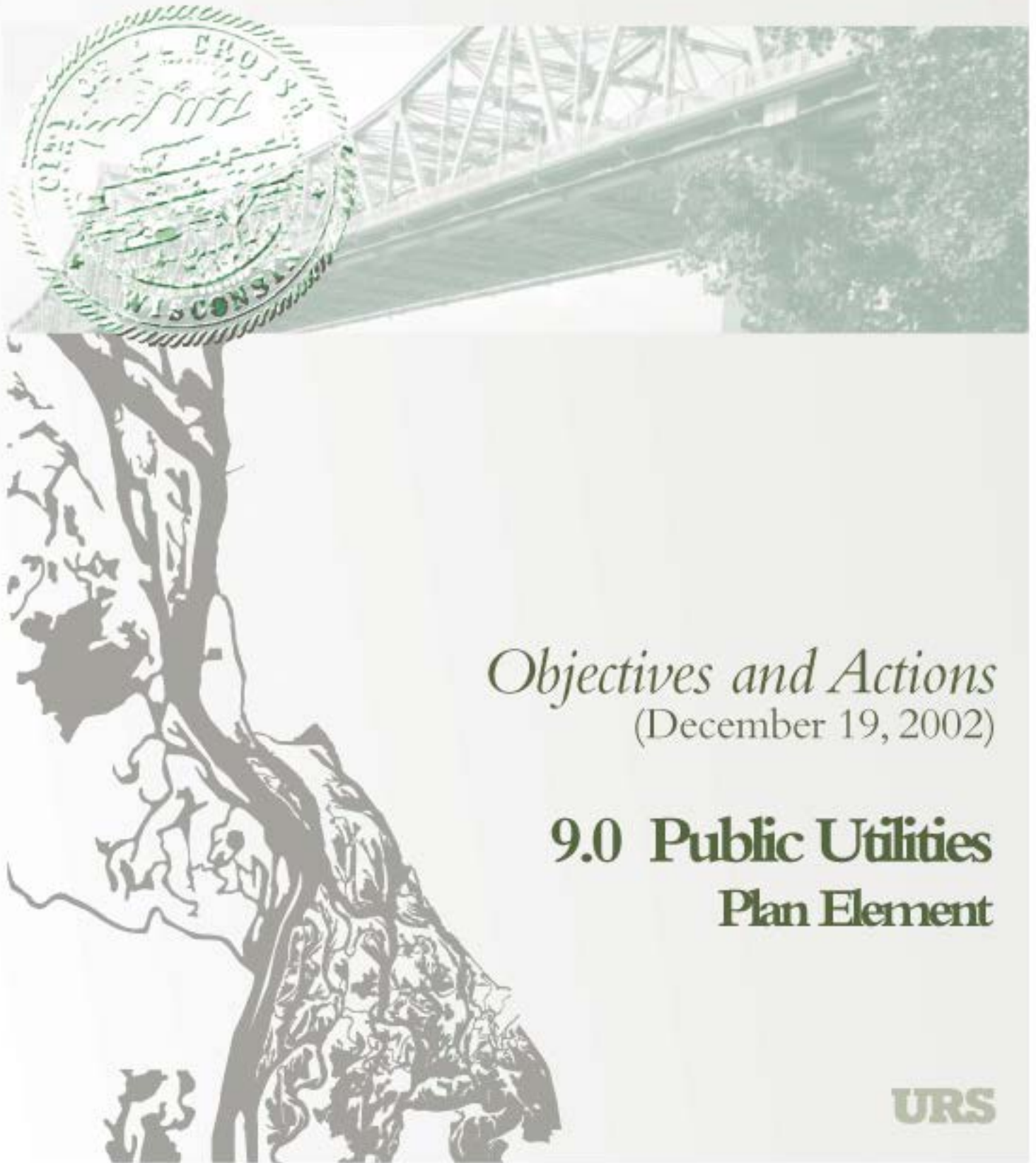
The following table lists the major activities needed to carry out this plan, indicates their relative priority and lists the responsible groups.

Table 8-1 : Implementation Program

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	Neighborhood Plans. Continue to prepare neighborhood plans in conformance with the comprehensive plan and use those plans to guide capital improvements and services.	Planning Department Plan Commission City Council Residents
1	Design Guidelines. Adopt a Unified Development Ordinance that incorporates design guidelines for new and infill development as well as street design.	Planning Department Plan Commission City Council
1	Home Ownership. Continue to identify and advertise incentive programs to foster home ownership and establish a more desirable renter/owner balance.	Planning Department Common Council
1	Code Enforcement. Continue to support and improve the City’s code enforcement capabilities by providing adequate staff, training and technology.	Planning Department Inspections Department Common Council
2	Institutional Growth Boundaries. Require major institutions, such as UW-L and Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center to establish growth boundaries and master plans	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council Major institutions Surrounding property owners
2	Transit Oriented Development. Through land use and zoning designation encourage relatively dense housing and mixed use development near MTU stops and along transit routes.	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council
2	Community Development Corporation. Develop a non-profit community development corporation to build and rehabilitate housing.	Planning Department Common Council Community investors
2	Neighborhood Amenities. Continue to explore and support programs to improve and expand access to parks and natural areas to create neighborhood amenities.	Parks Department Planning Department Common Council Parks Commission

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
3	Regional Housing Assistance. Form support for a regional solution to the needs of affordability, homelessness and housing for special needs.	Planning Department Common Council Other cities and counties State Agencies Community development corporation
3	Expand Housing Options. Zone property to provide for a range of housing options from single family dwellings to multiple family apartments in appropriate locations throughout the City.	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council
3	Police Patrols. Increase the level of foot and bicycle patrols in higher crime neighborhoods to increase police presence and foster better relationships with residents.	Planning Department Common Council Residents

Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

9.0 Public Utilities Plan Element

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Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC UTILITY ISSUES	1
SANITARY SEWER AND WATER SYSTEMS.....	1
SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT	2
FUNDING/COSTS.....	2
GUIDANCE FROM THE CONCEPT PLAN	3
SEWER SYSTEM	3
WATER SYSTEM.....	3
SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT	4
OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES PLAN	5
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC UTILITY OBJECTIVES	5
WATER AND SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM	7
OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	7
SYSTEM MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT.....	7
SYSTEM POLICY	9
SYSTEM ECONOMICS	16
SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	18
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM	34

List of Figures

FIGURE 9-1 POTENTIAL NEW UTILITY SERVICE AREAS	11
FIGURE 9-2 WELLHEAD PROTECTION AREAS.....	13
FIGURE 9-3 EXAMPLE OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	21
FIGURE 9-4 SURFACE WATER STUDY AREAS	27
FIGURE 9-5 SENSITIVE NATURAL RESOURCES	31

List of Tables

TABLE 9-1: MISSISSIPPI RIVER FLOOD STAGE HAZARDS.	25
TABLE 9-2: INDEX OF IDENTIFIED STORM WATER PROBLEM AREAS SHOWN ON FIGURE 9-4... ..	26
TABLE 9-3: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR SANITARY SEWER AND WATER SYSTEMS.....	34
TABLE 9-4: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR THE SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT.....	35

Appendices

Appendix A Water Quality Best Management Practices

Appendix B Techniques to Measure the Effectiveness of Best Management Practices

Public Utilities Plan Element

The public utility system in La Crosse consists of sanitary sewers, the water distribution system and surface water management facilities. Much of the public utility system is in good repair and serves the current needs of the City of La Crosse. In addition, the City currently provides sewer and water service to some areas outside its boundaries. One of the primary challenges facing the public utility system will be accommodating future growth in a manner that maintains the current high quality of service without undue cost increases. Improvements and expansions of the public utility system must be made strategically and should result in measurable benefits to City residents, businesses, and environment.

Summary of Public Utility Issues

The Public Utilities plan element is based on the findings compiled in the Conditions and Issues Report with direction provided by a public opinion survey, the Citizens Advisory Committee, and VisionFest. The major public utility issues are summarized below.

Sanitary Sewer and Water Systems

The existing water and sewer systems in La Crosse are generally in very good condition. Completed and planned projects will enhance and expand the operational capacity, performance and flexibility of both utilities. It is anticipated that several issues will emerge as the City's sewer and water systems grow to serve new areas and/or new developments. These include:

Infrastructure

- Are there existing critical water and/or sewer system deficiencies that could either hinder redevelopment within the current City limits or limit system extensions to serve new areas?
- Are there alternate, feasible, cost-effective ways to provide service to remote annexed areas of the City, other than continuing to extend the existing systems?

Extension Policy

- Should the City of La Crosse provide utility services to new areas without requiring annexation?
- Should La Crosse consider alternative means to provide utility service in lieu of extending existing systems from the City? (Example: Contract from another municipal entity.)

Regulatory

- What can the City do if future regulations result in reduced reserve water supply and wastewater treatment capacity currently available, or increase the cost to provide utility services?
- How will potential zoning or land use restrictions resulting from the Wellhead Protection Study affect existing and future City properties?
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit

Service

- Will City of La Crosse rate-payers support utility service extensions to new areas at any cost in conjunction with annexation?
- What can the City do to minimize changes to the quality of service when utilities are extended to new areas?

Surface Water Management

Water Quality

- Can the City meet the required goals of the NPDES Phase II with current City ordinances?
- What baseline should the City set for measuring and controlling water quality?
- What steps should the City take to ensure Best Management Practices (BMP) for water quality are being met? This is particularly a problem when the City receives surface water from outside its jurisdiction.

Control Runoff and Flooding

- To what extent should the City establish stronger development controls to limit impervious surface area, reduce street widths, and limit vegetation clearance and grading to minimize the amount of runoff and control peak runoff rates?
- How can existing development located in the floodplain be protected from flooding?

Funding/Costs

- Should the City establish a dedicated funding source, such as a Surface Water Utility, to provide a steady source of funding for surface water management projects?
- How can costs associated with surface water management and erosion control enforcement and inspection be incorporated into development or redevelopment projects? To what extent should developers be required to cover these costs?

Guidance from the Concept Plan

The Concept Plan for *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan* emphasizes that new development should be guided to areas currently serviced with public utilities or within designated future service areas. New utilities should be provided in a cost-efficient and environmentally sensitive manner, following BMPs. The Concept Plan provides the following direction to the Public Utilities Plan:

Sewer System

- **Maintenance:** The City should give priority to maintaining sewers in areas that are presently developed over expansion of the sewer system.
- **System Expansion:** The City should continue to build collection and treatment facilities that are adequate to meet future demand on a targeted basis, to accommodate planned growth in northeast and southeast fringe areas. Annexation should always be required in exchange for the extension of City sanitary sewer service.
- **Annexation of Previously Served Areas:** The City should proactively pursue annexation of properties in surrounding jurisdictions currently served by City sewer, if such annexation is determined to be financially beneficial to the City in the long term.
- **Rural Development:** Development in rural areas, except property reserved for agriculture, should either be served by community sanitary sewer systems or be built at a density no greater than one house per 35 acres and utilize individual on-site septic systems.

Water System

- **Maintenance:** The City should give priority to maintaining the water system in areas that are presently developed over expansion of the water system.
- **System Expansion:** The City should continue to provide water distribution and storage facilities on a targeted basis, to accommodate planned growth in northeast and southeast fringe areas. The City of La Crosse should provide booster stations and additional storage facilities, as needed. Annexation should always be required in exchange for the extension of City water service.
- **Charges:** The water assessment rate should be increased to cover the actual cost to extend service to outlying areas.

Surface Water Management

- **Design Practices:** The amount of existing impervious surface area should be reduced to reduce flood risk and improve aquifer recharge. Natural drainage and filtration methods should be used to the extent possible in new development and redevelopment projects. There should be an emphasis on additional development controls to require buffer areas to filter and slow surface water runoff in new subdivisions.
- **Floodplain Reclamation:** The City should explore whether certain developed floodplains or portions of such floodplains should be returned to their natural conditions through public acquisition of land and clearance of buildings. This should be done in conjunction with a cost-benefit study of rebuilding the levee along the Black River.
- **Natural Design:** Natural design techniques should be used to manage stream flows and flooding. Concrete channels like the one built in Pammel Creek should only be created if natural design techniques are deemed unfeasible. All surface water management facilities should be designed to appear natural in character and should include pedestrian and/or bicyclist amenities whenever possible.



Pammel Creek – a man-made drainage channel



A natural drainage channel

Overview of the Public Utilities Plan

Public utilities must be reliable and efficient in order to provide system users with dependable service. These utilities must provide service and capacity for existing users as well as future growth through planned system improvements and enhancements. Water systems must meet and strive to exceed regulatory standards in order to maintain a high quality water supply. Similarly, wastewater facilities must effectively and efficiently collect, transport and treat sewage. A high level of customer service must be maintained, and utility rates must be reasonable and fair for all system users.

The Public Utility plan element also addresses issues related to storm water management, which primarily involve controlling the rate and amount of runoff and improving water quality. As the City has become more fully developed, portions of the existing storm sewer system have become insufficient to convey the increased storm water flows resulting from increased development. As development continues beyond the current City boundaries, storm water runoff from those areas will affect La Crosse.

The Public Utility plan element establishes a framework to guide improvements and expansion of the public utility system that provides for municipal growth without sacrificing neighborhood revitalization or prime natural resources. It also outlines strategies to manage storm water to minimize flood potential and protect and enhance the City's vast water-based natural resources.

Summary of Public Utility Objectives

Because of similarity in issues and service delivery, many of the objectives and actions relative to the sanitary sewer and water systems have been combined. The major Public Utility objectives are summarized below.

Sewer and Water

Objective 1: System Maintenance and Improvements. Maintain and improve sewer and water system infrastructure to ensure adequate capacity and integrity to serve existing users and accommodate planned new services areas.

Objective 2: Regulatory Compliance. Address known and anticipated regulatory compliance issues in conjunction with correction of water and sewer system deficiencies.

Objective 3: System Expansion. Consistently evaluate water and sanitary sewer system improvements, including system extensions to new areas, to ensure they provide a measurable benefit to the City.

Objective 4: Wellhead Protection. Control development around wellheads to ensure protection of the public water supply.

Objective 5: Cost-effective Services. Invest in system improvements strategically to ensure they are cost-effective.

Objective 6: Service Impacts. Minimize service-related impacts resulting from improvements and expansion of the water and sanitary sewer system and service.

Surface Water Management

Objective 7: Improve Surface Water Runoff Quality. Improve the quality of surface water runoff from new developments and redevelopment projects, and correct existing water quality problems.

Objective 8: Control Surface Water Runoff and Flooding. Control the amount of runoff from new developments and redevelopment projects to minimize downstream flooding.

Objective 9: Sensitive Development. Adopt ordinances and standards to meet the objectives of improving water quality, controlling the quantity of surface water runoff, and protecting natural resources.

Objective 10: Dedicated Funding. Establish a dedicated funding source to implement surface water management projects, flood protection projects, permitting, inspection, and enforcement activities.

Water and Sanitary Sewer System Objectives and Actions

The existing water and sanitary sewer systems serving the City of La Crosse are generally in very good condition. As the City strives to improve existing neighborhoods and to expand into new areas without public utilities, it is essential that the municipal utilities have reliable capacity to accommodate new service demands. The City must therefore be proactive in its efforts to maintain and improve services provided by the water and sanitary sewer system. Well-planned utility improvements will further enhance all other facets of City wide comprehensive planning efforts.

Objectives and actions identified below address issues related to the water and sanitary sewer systems. Objectives are organized under three general categories:

- **System Maintenance and Improvement** objectives focus on actions to **correct known deficiencies** in the water and sanitary sewer systems, **improve service** within the existing City limits, and to plan and construct **new facilities** to accommodate growth.
- **System Policy** objectives focus on defining clear **criteria to evaluate** system improvements and extensions. These objectives would apply to new development and/or redevelopment within the existing City boundaries.
- **System Economic** objectives consider **monetary and service impacts** to water and sanitary sewer system users resulting from major system extensions and improvements to accommodate new development.

System Maintenance and Improvement

The primary goal for the City is to provide all water and sanitary sewer system users a similar, high level of service. Water and sanitary sewer system improvement objectives and actions are intended to:

- Ensure that reliable service is maintained within existing service areas and is available for new areas connecting to the utility system.
- Consider other sources of service as alternatives to expanding the existing water and sanitary sewer systems.

Objective 1: System Maintenance and Improvements. Maintain and improve sewer and water system infrastructure to ensure adequate capacity and integrity to serve existing users and accommodate new service areas.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Planned Maintenance and Rehabilitation.** The City shall continue to utilize the *1999 Comprehensive Water System Study* as the primary planning tool to prioritize and correct deficiencies in the existing water system. Similarly, the City (Water Utility) shall analyze the condition and capacity of existing infrastructure affected by planned street replacement projects and schedule system maintenance or replacement as required.

The City shall continue to schedule and complete preventative maintenance projects on major wastewater treatment system structures and processes. Similarly, the City shall continue to utilize sewer system televising and inspections to identify areas of the sanitary sewer collection in need of replacement, lining or rehabilitation.

- 2. System Mapping and Modeling.** The City shall maintain digital maps of the water and sanitary sewer systems to provide current information for analysis and use available modeling software to identify deficiencies. Additionally, modeling software will be utilized to analyze water system sizing requirements to serve areas of potential future growth.

Once digital mapping of the sanitary sewer system is completed in 2002, the City shall evaluate and consider obtaining a suitable sewer system computer model package to further identify deficiencies in the system.

- 3. Funding.** Based on the results of ongoing system modeling, inspections and/or analyses the City shall support and authorize capital funding or use of other available utility funds to plan, schedule and complete necessary water and sanitary sewer system improvements.
- 4. Review and Approval Protocol.** The City will update and implement clear approval criteria and standards for all water and sanitary sewer system extensions in order to manage the impact on existing facilities, and to ensure installation of adequate facilities to accommodate planned future development.
- 5. Extension Alternatives.** Where potential new service areas are remotely located from the central City, the City shall consider possible service alternatives in lieu of extending the existing systems. The public benefits and cost-effectiveness of alternatives will be considered in determining the viability of each alternative.

Objective 2: Regulatory Compliance. Address known and anticipated regulatory compliance issues in conjunction with correction of water and sewer system deficiencies.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Regulatory Agency Contacts.** The City shall develop and maintain working relationships with regulatory agency representatives at all levels to monitor and anticipate changes in regulations affecting the water and sanitary sewer systems.
2. **Professional Organizations.** The City shall actively network and participate with professional organizations serving the water and sewer industries to best utilize ideas, experience and strategies already available.

System Policy

Water and sanitary sewer system policy objectives and actions focus on developing rules, ordinances and/or policies to:

- Evaluate and compare the costs and benefits to the City resulting from water and sanitary sewer system improvements and extensions, and
- Implement zoning or land use regulations to control certain types of developments in coordination with availability of public utilities. This process must apply both to new developments and to areas of redevelopment within the City limits.

The primary goal is to ensure that water and sanitary sewer system improvements and extensions provide a measurable, positive benefit to the City of La Crosse, and that utility demands from new development do not threaten the integrity or quality of either utility.

Objective 3: System Expansion. Consistently evaluate water and sanitary sewer system improvements, including system extensions to new areas, to ensure they provide a measurable benefit to the City.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Extension of Urban Services.** The City shall only extend water and sewer lines outside its present border in exchange for annexation of land or in accordance with an approved inter-municipal boundary agreement. The City shall focus extension of urban services in select areas within the current Sewer Service Area shown on Figure 9-1 and described below in priority order:
 1. Town of Shelby along STH 14/61
 2. Town of Shelby along STH 35 south of current City limits
 3. Town of Shelby west of the BNSF railroad tracks and south of Shelby Road
 4. Town of Shelby along Ebner Coulee Road and Floral Lane
 5. Town of Medary along Smith Valley Road, Keil Coulee and other small coulees

6. Town of Medary along and adjacent to CTH B
7. Town of Shelby along Highway 33
8. Town of Shelby along Old Vineyard Road
9. Town of Shelby along Crown Boulevard/Queen Avenue

Given steep topography in the outlying coulees, these select areas reflect where extending sewer service would most likely be feasible. More detailed information would be needed to evaluate the costs and benefits of a specific system extension.

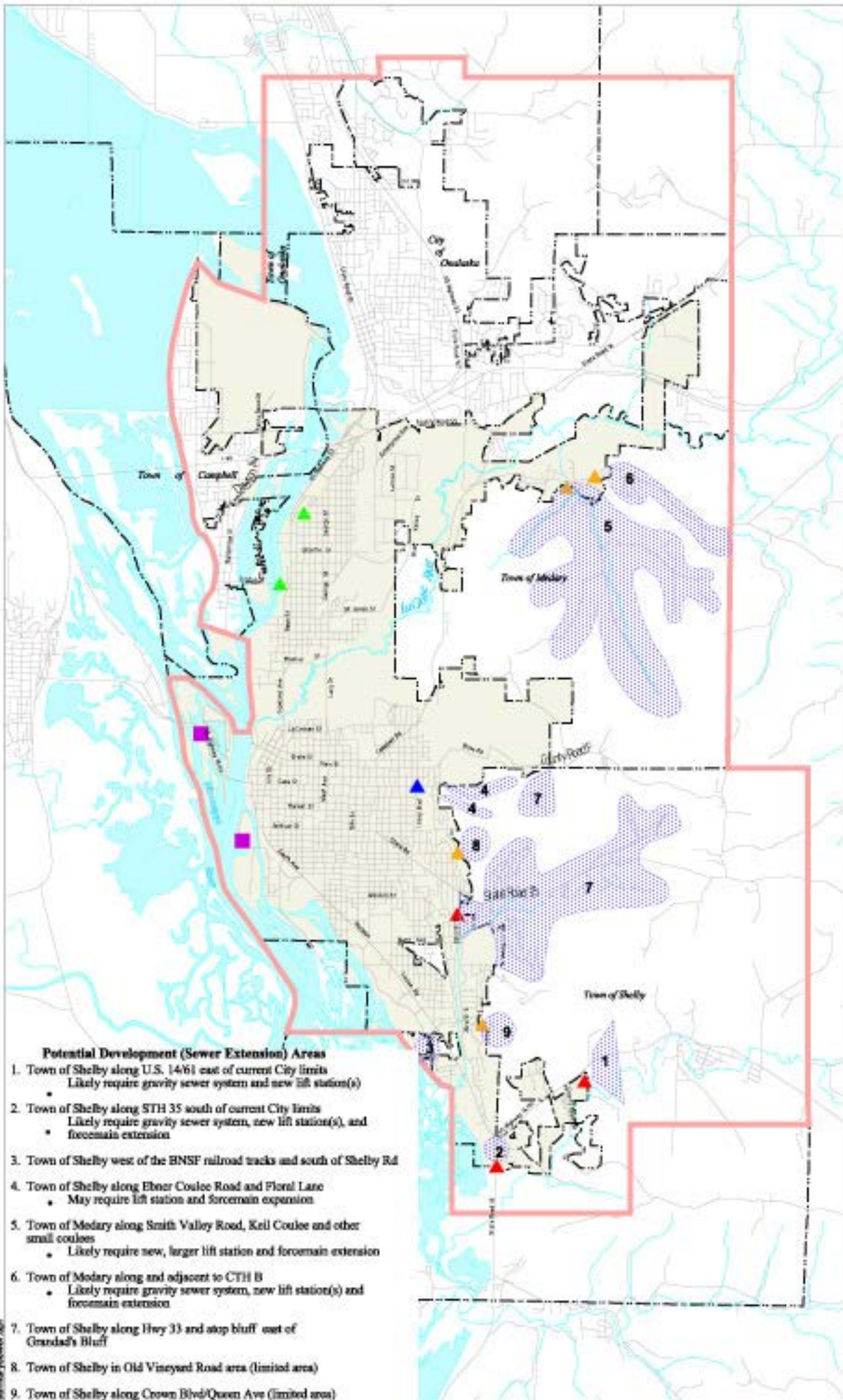


Steep topography makes utility extensions more difficult (and expensive) in outlying areas

2. **Approval Criteria.** The City shall develop criteria for review and approval of water and sanitary sewer system extensions and improvements in order to manage the impact on existing facilities, and to ensure installation of adequate facilities to accommodate planned future development. At a minimum, criteria shall consider, all costs related to or resulting from water and sanitary sewer system improvements, all expected benefits to the City resulting from the improvements including the amount of anticipated service demand, impacts on current user fees, impacts on current system capacity, and environmental impacts.

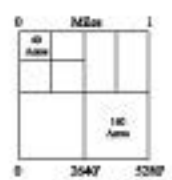
**Figure 9-1
Urban
Expansion
Areas**

-  8" Existing Sewer End
-  12" Existing Sewer End
-  15" Existing Sewer End
-  30" Existing Sewer End
-  Waste Water Plant
-  Sewer Extension Areas
-  Water
-  Sewer Service Area Boundary
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Street
-  City of La Crosse



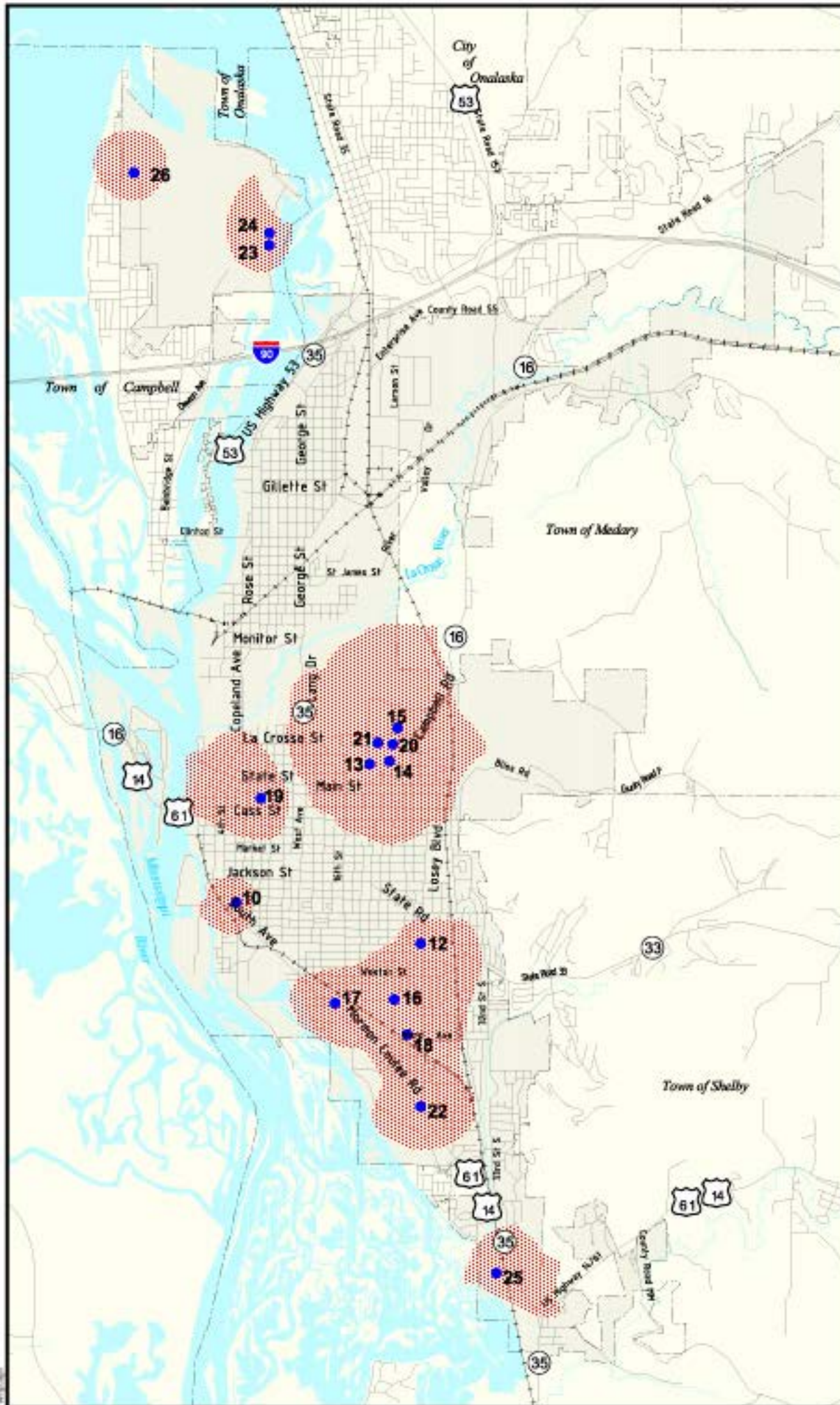
Potential Development (Sewer Extension) Areas

1. Town of Shelby along U.S. 14/61 east of current City limits
 - Likely require gravity sewer system and new lift station(s)
2. Town of Shelby along STH 35 south of current City limits
 - Likely require gravity sewer system, new lift station(s), and forcemain extension
3. Town of Shelby west of the BNSF railroad tracks and south of Shelby Rd
4. Town of Shelby along Ebner Coulee Road and Floral Lane
 - May require lift station and forcemain expansion
5. Town of Medary along Smith Valley Road, Keil Coulee and other small coulees
 - Likely require new, larger lift station and forcemain extension
6. Town of Medary along and adjacent to CTH B
 - Likely require gravity sewer system, new lift station(s) and forcemain extension
7. Town of Shelby along Hwy 33 and atop bluff east of Grandad's Bluff
8. Town of Shelby in Old Vineyard Road area (limited area)
9. Town of Shelby along Crown Blvd/Queen Ave (limited area)

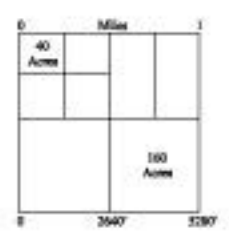


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Figure 9-2
Wellhead
Protection
Area



- Municipal Boundary
- City of La Crosse
- Water
- Railroads
- Roads
- Well
- Wellhead Protection Area (Based on 5-year time-of-travel)



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Objective 4: Wellhead Protection. Control development around wellheads to ensure protection of the public water supply.

Residents and businesses depend on groundwater for a safe drinking water supply. Certain land use practices and activities can seriously threaten or degrade groundwater quality. It is therefore essential to control development around wellheads to protect the municipal water supply and well fields.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Identify Protection Areas.** The City shall identify, based on findings in the completed *Wellhead Protection Study*, areas where land uses and development activity should be restricted in order to protect the groundwater.

Figure 9-2 illustrates wellhead protection areas, based on a five year time-of-travel for water to reach each well, as identified in the *Wellhead Protection Study*. The City may want to refine the extent of these areas, using longer or shorter times-of-travel depending on existing and proposed land uses in the area. For example, in areas used and planned for very low intensity land uses, a smaller protection area may suffice.



Well House on 7th Street

- 2. Create Overlay Zoning.** The City shall consider establishing an overlay zoning district that would apply to the wellhead protection areas illustrated on Figure 9-2. This would include adoption of development standards to control and restrict certain uses (e.g., oil tanks). It might also define and require implementation of mitigation measures for uses that pose contamination concerns.

The City may chose to vary land use and development restrictions, depending on the distance from the wellhead. For example, greater restrictions may be warranted in areas closer to a wellhead, such as within a one-year time-of-travel.

- 3. Public Education.** The City shall engage in public education efforts with property owners within wellhead protection areas. Efforts might include newsletters, brochures, and seminars to raise awareness of potential wellhead contamination risks and share ideas about steps individual property owners can take to minimize contamination risks. Such efforts might be done in conjunction with other public education efforts required as part of NPDES Phase II storm water permit regulations. NPDES is discussed in greater detail in the following section on storm water management.

System Economics

Water and sanitary sewer system economic objectives and actions are designed to consider the cost impacts of system improvements, including service extensions to serve new areas, as well as the impacts to user rates and quality of service.

Water and sanitary sewer system improvements and extensions will inevitably lead to increases in water and sewer user rates and could impact quality of service. The goal is to offset the overall cost increases with measurable benefits to water and sanitary sewer system rate-payers and City taxpayers.

Objective 5: Cost-effective Services. Invest in system improvements strategically to ensure they are cost-effective.

Continual investment in public infrastructure is essential to maintain not only public health, safety, and welfare, but also to enhance the community's quality of life and ensure it remains a desirable place to live, work and play. However, public budgets are limited and funds must be spent prudently and strategically. When spending public dollars on infrastructure improvements, it is important to achieve a return on investment and to make spending choices that are defensible and worthy of the investment.



Wastewater Treatment Plant

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Evaluate Costs and Benefits.** The City shall determine the initial costs to construct, operate, and maintain proposed system improvements or extensions and estimate potential additional tax revenue to be generated from proposed new service areas based on anticipated land use and development. Potential revenue will be compared to estimated costs to determine the general cost-effectiveness of a proposed system improvement or expansion. The City shall confirm that the benefits of system improvement justify the investment and costs. This is particularly important where user rates and/or property taxes may increase as a result of system improvements.

2. **Strategic Growth.** When considering system improvements or service extensions, the City shall evaluate the potential strategic value of the new development area to ensure it is consistent with planned City growth.
3. **Community Assets.** The City shall consider non-economic benefits related to system extensions into new areas, including, but not limited to, provision of additional parkland and recreational facilities, protection of important vistas, protection of natural habitat, etc.

Objective 6: Service Impacts. Minimize service-related impacts resulting from improvements and expansion of the water and sanitary sewer system and service.

The benefits of system improvements and expansion must also be considered in light of potential service impacts, such as rate increases. As a general policy, expansion of the water and sanitary system should only be undertaken when resulting service impacts on existing users are determined to be minor or can be mitigated cost-effectively.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Operating Expense Impacts.** In conjunction with the review of proposed utility extensions to serve new areas, the City shall evaluate the impact of such extensions on added operating expenses regarding other affected City services, e.g., police and fire protection, street construction and maintenance, provision of parks and recreation facilities, etc.
2. **User Rate Impacts.** The City shall analyze and monitor changes to water and sewer user rates resulting from system improvements and extensions. Expansion of water and sewer systems requires up front capital dollars for construction. The City currently assesses for utility improvements. Although, a large portion of the assessed cost is usually deferred and paid back over a long period of time. Under current assessment policy, the Water Utility subsidizes a significant portion of new infrastructure costs. Therefore, significant growth could result in increased borrowing and debt.

In addition, expansion of utility systems results in more water, sanitary and storm sewer pipes and associated facilities, all of which must be operated and maintained. To control cost increases, the City continues to make improvements, such as implementing new technology that allows for reduced staffing.

3. **Service Response Impacts.** The City shall evaluate the potential for reduced levels of service resulting from spreading fixed service resources over the expanded service area.

Surface Water Management Objectives and Actions

This section describes the primary objectives and corresponding actions relative to storm water management. The following objectives and action items are intended to provide direction to help the City to meet the goals of the Concept Plan mentioned above.

Objective 7: Improve Surface Water Runoff Quality. Improve the quality of surface water runoff from new developments and redevelopment projects, and correct existing water quality problems.

Urbanization increases the level of nutrients and pollutants that wash-off from rainfall or snowmelt to water bodies. The major urban nonpoint-source pollutants include sediment, nutrients, oxygen-demanding substances, toxic chemicals, chloride, and bacteria. Runoff from paved areas, which tends to be warmer than rainfall, can increase the temperature in water bodies thereby affecting some wildlife, particularly trout. Eliminating or minimizing the amount of these pollutants entering receiving waters is critical to improving water quality.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Obtain a Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) Stormwater Permit.** The City of La Crosse shall submit a permit application – referred to as a “Notice of Intent” - to the State by March 2003 as required under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) NPDES program and the State of Wisconsin. The Notice of Intent must contain the following:
 - **Adopt Best Management Practices (BMPs)** for each of the following six minimum control measures:
 1. Public education and outreach on surface water impacts.
 2. Public participation/involvement.
 3. Elicit discharge detection and elimination.
 4. Construction site surface water runoff control.
 5. Post-construction surface water management in new development/redevelopment.
 6. Pollution prevention/good housekeeping for municipal operations.
 - **Develop measurable goals** for each of the six control measures mentioned above, and a time frame for implementing each measure, including interim milestones.
 - **Identify person(s) responsible for implementing** or coordinating surface water programs.

2. Develop a Surface Water Management Program. The City shall develop a surface water management program that meets the requirements of the Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Storm Water Permit (WPDES). To do that, the City shall:

- a. **Conduct a self-analysis** to better understand the City’s status in relation to the WPDES requirements. The analysis should include an assessment of the City’s surface water management and conveyance system and current programs and practices. The self-analysis should also include a determination of what pollutants and sources are impacting the condition of the receiving water bodies. Finally, identify stakeholders and develop overall objectives for the surface water program.
- b. **Create an action plan** to determine what should be done and the timeline for implementation of the surface water program. Select appropriate BMPs for each of the six minimum control measures based on the information from the self-analysis. Appendix A identifies possible BMPs and Appendix B notes BMPs and example measurable goals. Some of these are illustrated in Figure 9-3 a-e. The EPA has identified several requirements that must be included in some of the six minimum control measures. They are as follows:

Elicit Discharge Detection and Elimination

- Prepare a storm sewer map, showing the location of all outfalls and the names and locations of receiving water bodies.
- Adopt an ordinance, or other regulatory mechanism, prohibiting non-surface water discharge into the municipal storm sewer system, and enforcement procedures and actions.
- Prepare a plan to detect and address non-surface water discharges, including illegal dumping into the municipal storm sewer system.
- Conduct educational programs for public employees, businesses, and the general public about the hazards associated with illegal discharges and improper disposal of waste.

Construction Site Runoff Control

- Adopt an ordinance, or other regulatory mechanism, requiring the implementation of proper erosion and sediment controls, and controls for other wastes, from construction sites with a land disturbance greater than one acre.
- Have procedures for site plan review of construction plans that consider potential water quality impacts.
- Have procedures for site inspection and enforcement of control measures.
- Have sanctions to ensure compliance.
- Establish procedures for the receipt and consideration of inquiries, concerns and information submitted by the public.

Post-Construction Runoff Control

- Develop and implement strategies including both structural and non-structural BMPs.
- Adopt an ordinance, or other regulatory mechanism, requiring the implementation of post-construction runoff controls to the extent allowable under State or local law.
- Ensure adequate long-term operation and maintenance of controls.

Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping

- Develop and implement an operation and maintenance program with the ultimate goal of preventing or reducing pollutant runoff from municipal operations into the storm sewer system.
- Include employee training on how to incorporate pollution prevention/good housekeeping techniques into municipal operations, such as parks and open space maintenance, fleet and building maintenance, new construction and land disturbances, and Surface Water system maintenance.

c. **Determine program funding** and staff requirements.

d. **Identify a lead City department** and individual to carry out the program requirements.

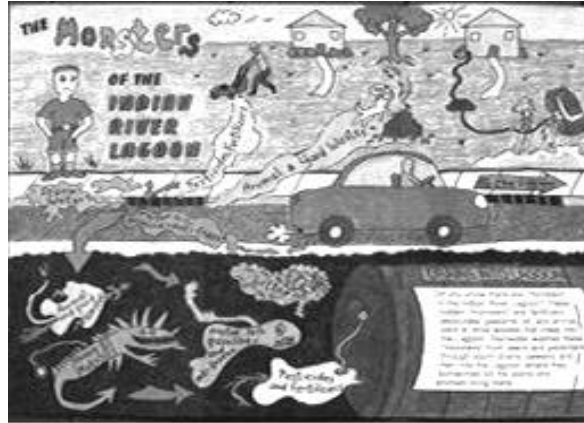
e. **Identify partnership opportunities** to determine if partnering with the neighboring communities of Campbell, Medary, Onalaska, and Shelby is feasible, cost-effective and in the best interest of La Crosse.

3. **Correct Existing Water Quality Problems.** Once an area is developed, the options to improve water quality are usually much more limited and more expensive. When an existing water quality problem is identified, the City shall use the following process to identify the proper BMPs to correct the problem:

- Identify water-quality problem by either impairment of a beneficial use, violation of a water-quality criteria, or local public perception.
- Identify pollutants by water-quality monitoring and diagnostic study.
- Set a realistic water-quality goal for each problem identified.
- Select the appropriate BMP for the site and situation.
- Implement, operate, and maintain BMPs through:
 - Information and education programs
 - Local regulation of certain land-use activities
 - Local government ownership and operation of regional BMPs
- Evaluation of BMPs for effectiveness, which could include a monitoring program or resident survey.

Figure 9-3 Example of Best Management Practices

a. Public Education Materials



An example of a poster teaching children about storm water issues



Educational materials regarding storm water



Curb cuts can direct runoff from impervious surfaces to vegetated areas

b. Public Participation



Storm drains can be labeled with stencils to discourage dumping



People can become involved in pollution prevention by volunteering to clean up streams
(Source: Water Action Volunteers, 1998)

c. Construction Site Runoff Control Measures



Silt fences prevent the off site transport of sediment

d. Post-Construction Storm Water Management Techniques



Bioretention areas used in parking areas to collect and treat storm water
(Source Univ. of Maryland, 2000)



Wet pond detain storm water and facilitate pollutant removal through settling and biological uptake

e. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping Efforts



Street sweeping removes pollutants and sediments on the street to reduce pollutants entering receiving waters



Applying too much lawn fertilizer can create water quality problems

Objective 8: Control Surface Water Runoff and Flooding. Control the amount of runoff from new developments and redevelopment projects to minimize downstream flooding.

A significant portion of the northern part of the City was developed in the 100-year floodplain. As a result, many existing structures in this area are considered “non-conforming” since current zoning regulations would not allow them to be built in the floodplain. In order to phase out non-conforming uses only limited repairs and improvements are allowed and improvements cannot exceed 50 percent of the assessed value of the property. The City has determined that wholesale removal of structures on these parcels would not be cost effective. In addition, new construction is allowed in this area provided it conforms to the new floodplain regulations. However, several non-conforming properties in this area are faced with a potential long-term devaluation and continued risk of flooding and property damage.

The amount of impervious surface also greatly affects runoff and flood potential. Development of buildings and pavement reduces the amount of rainfall that can infiltrate into the soil. As a result, surface water runoff volumes and velocities increase, causing higher water flows, flooding, erosion and adverse effects on natural habitats and hydrologic systems, including groundwater recharge.

Policies/Actions:

1. Identify Problem Areas. The City shall continue to identify and map areas known to have flooding problems or that are located in the 100-year or 500-year floodplain. Figure 9-4, Surface Water Study Areas, illustrates known problem areas, the 100-year floodplain, and future growth areas. This map should be updated as more detailed information is compiled regarding problem areas.

These known problem areas are described more specifically in Tables 9-1 and 9-2. Table 9-1 identifies known areas subject to flooding along the Mississippi River and Table 9-2 provides an index to the problem areas shown on Figure 9-4.

2. Prepare Model. The City shall prepare a model of its storm sewer system to identify additional areas subject to flooding or where the system is inadequate and to better assess the extent of the known problem areas noted above. The preparation of a model and associated analysis of the storm sewer system will help the City determine possible corrective actions and prioritize potential storm water management efforts to reduce and/or eliminate flooding. The model can also be used to analyze potential impacts of new development on the City’s storm sewer system.

3. Develop Options. The City shall develop and evaluate options to protect properties located in the floodplain. Options to protect properties include: rebuilding/raising levees, installing gates at storm sewer outfalls, disconnecting gravity storm sewer system from water bodies and installing surface water pumping stations. In addition, the City should estimate associated costs relative to such options.

Table 9-1: Mississippi River Flood Stage Hazards

Flood Stage (feet)	Flood Hazard Location
11.0	Pettibone Park Portions of Barron Island
12.0	Flood stage
15.0	Dikes necessary to maintain access to homes in northern La Crosse
15.5	Highway south of La Crosse flooded
17.3	100-year flood level
17.9	Flood of record past 121 years (1965)
18.0	Airport Road protected to this flood stage

Source: National Weather Service, La Crosse, WI (revised by City Staff)



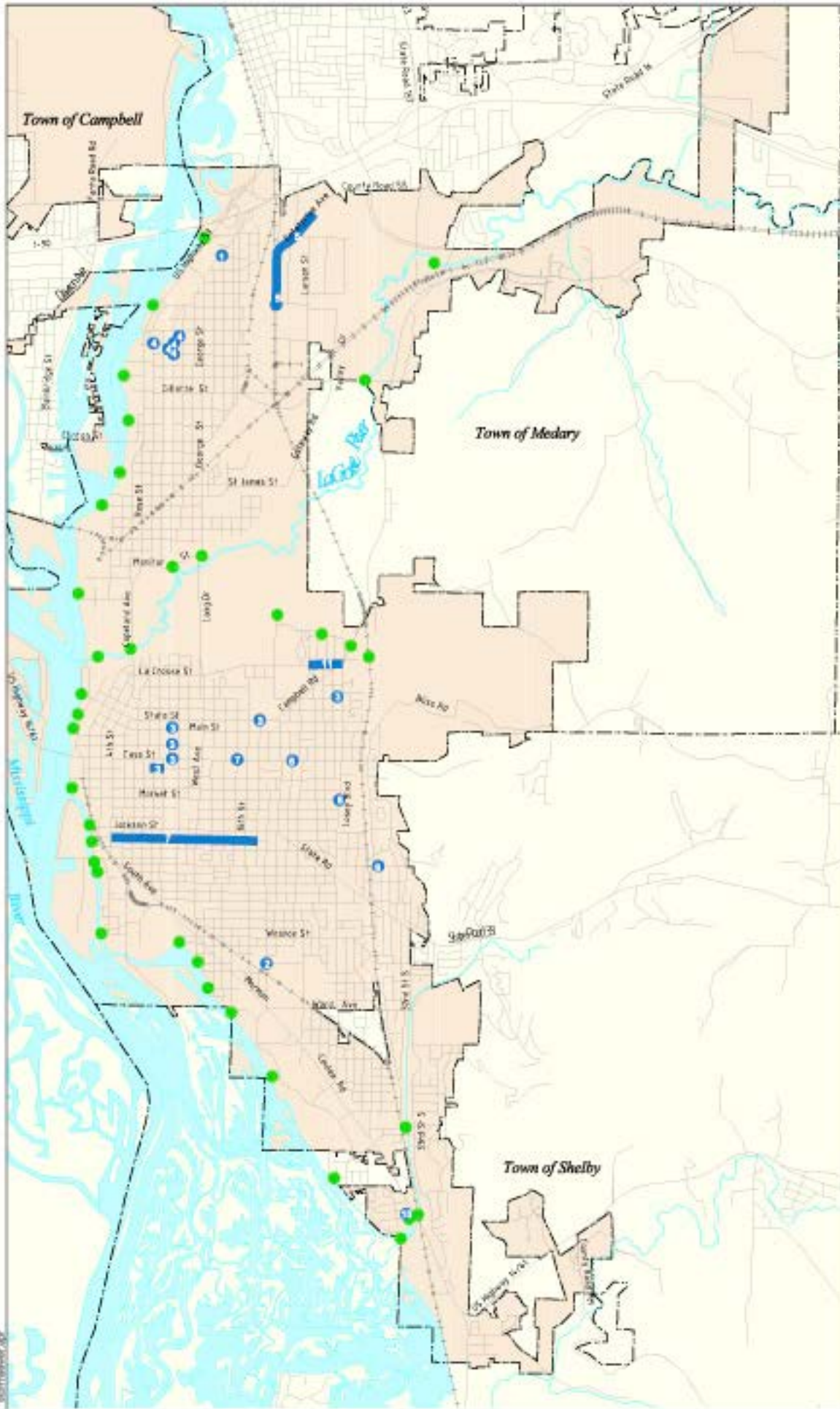
Flooding in Copeland Park

Table 9-2: Index of Identified Storm Water Problem Areas Shown on Figure 9-4

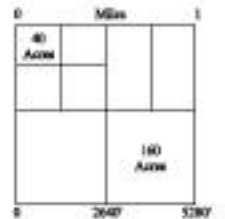
Identification No.	Problem Location	Type of Problem
1	Upper George and Stoddard Streets	Flooding
2	East Avenue and Townsend Street	Flooding
3	Pine Street line – intersections	
	Cass Street - 9 th through 10 th	Flooding
	King Street - 9 th through 10 th	Flooding
	Main Street - 9 th through 10 th	Flooding
	8 th and Cameron Avenue	Flooding
	9 th and Cameron Avenue	Flooding
	24 th and Pine Street	Flooding
	Losey Boulevard and Pine Street	Flooding
	17 th Street and State Street	Flooding
4	Palace Street line – intersections:	
	Caledonia Street and Livingston Street	Flooding
	Liberty Street and Livingston Street	Flooding
	Liberty Street and North Street	Flooding
	Alley Problem Areas	
	Moore, Charles, Livingston and Liberty	Flooding
	Avon, North, Livingston and Liberty	Flooding
5	Gillette Street line	
	Oak and Palace Street	Flooding and displaced covers
	Enterprise Avenue	Displaced covers
6	Farnam Street line	
	20 th and Cass Street	Flooding
7	Johnson Street line	
	15 th and Cass Street	Flooding
	4 th through 17 th Street	Displaced covers
8	Losey Boulevard and Market Street	Flooding
9	27th Street and Farnam Street	Gate
10	Mormon Coulee Road west of overhead	Flooding
11	La Crosse Street – Hillview to Losey Boulevard	Sewer undersized

Source: City of La Crosse

**Figure 9-4
Surface Water
Study Areas**



-  Storm Sewer Outfall
-  Identified Storm Sewer Problem Area
-  Future Growth Area
-  Water
-  100 Year Floodplain
-  City of LaCrosse / Municipal Boundary
-  Street



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Objective 9: Sensitive Development. Adopt ordinances and standards to meet the objectives of improving water quality, controlling the quantity of surface water runoff, and protecting natural resources.

Urbanization increases the amount of impervious surface, thus increasing surface water runoff volume, pollutants, velocities, and water temperature. As the City of La Crosse grows and new construction occurs on currently undeveloped property, the amount of impervious area will increase, which in turn will increase the amount of runoff and, potentially, the level of contaminants in runoff. However, appropriate surface water management techniques can be used that help protect natural resources while achieving water quality and quantity goals.

As new development occurs in fringe areas it will be especially important to utilize development BMPs that minimize runoff, site clearance, and other impacts to natural resources. Redevelopment in the City can also provide opportunities to improve water quality and reduce the amount of runoff if measures are taken to reduce the amount of impervious surface and filter runoff.

Figure 9-5 identifies rivers, streams, wetlands, open spaces and bluffs that could be impacted by development and urbanization. A more detailed inventory may be needed to identify specific resources within these areas, such as trout streams, that merit special protection. Further discussion on this topic is included in the Natural Resources plan element.

Policies/Actions:

1. Construction and Development Standards. In order to protect natural resources, the City should adopt development standards, including BMPs, to improve runoff quality and control the amount of runoff from both new development and redevelopment projects. These should include standards or incentives to:

- Restrict development in critical areas, such as steep slopes, natural drainage ways, shoreline, and erodible soils.
- Restrict removal of existing vegetation.
- Require on-site infiltration and limit the amount of impervious surface.
- Minimize construction-related impacts on the environment (e.g., grading)
- Encourage development that fits the terrain, and preserves and utilizes natural drainageways.
- Require detention ponds to be designed to include sufficient pretreatment volume to allow heavy particles to settle, primary treatment volume sufficient to remove smaller pollutants, and a conveyance system that minimizes erosion potential. Detention ponds should also be designed to minimize future ongoing maintenance and include landscaping for aesthetic and pollutant removal purposes.

Appendix A lists some BMPs that can be used to improve runoff quality and control runoff quantity.

- 2. Implement BMP Monitoring and Maintenance Program.** The City shall maintain structural BMPs (e.g., detention ponds) to ensure long-term effectiveness in removing pollutants from storm water runoff. The City shall also continually monitor the quality of natural resources to determine if adopted BMPs and development regulations are adequately protecting the resources. Appendix B describes several techniques to evaluate and measure BMP effectiveness.



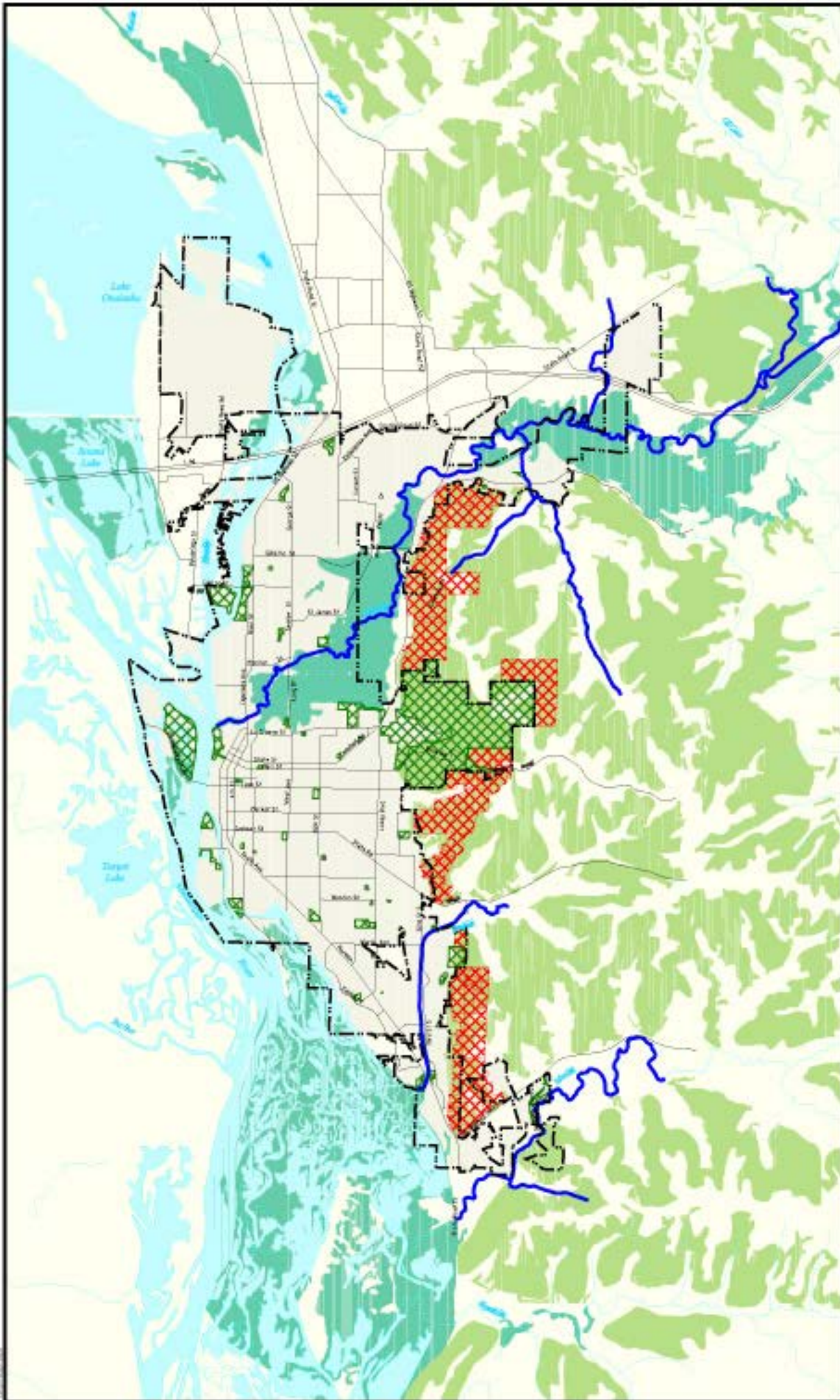
Rainwater gardens collect runoff and provide attractive site amenities

- 3. Quantifiable Objectives.** The City shall develop quantifiable objectives for managing surface water runoff from new developments and redevelopment projects for the following criteria:
- **Removal of total suspended solids.** The amount of suspended solids entering receiving water bodies impacts water clarity.
 - **Peak runoff rates.** Maintaining peak runoff rates to predevelopment conditions is desirable.
 - **Total volume of runoff.** Maintain runoff volume to predevelopment conditions is desirable.
 - **Temperature change.** Minimizing temperature change, particularly temperature increases, is important in watersheds that discharge to sensitive trout streams.

Thresholds for each of these criteria may vary depending on the existing or proposed quality of the receiving water or impacted resource. Areas identified as sensitive habitat or resources will warrant greater levels of protection.

Figure 9-5

***Sensitive
Natural
Resources***



-  *Municipal Boundary*
-  *Street*
-  *City of La Crosse*
-  *Water*
-  *Wetland Complex*
-  *Critical Rivers and Streams*
-  *LaCrosse Parks*
-  *Bluff Protection Area*
-  *Critical Slopes and Woodlands*



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Objective 10: Dedicate Funding. Establish a dedicated funding source to implement surface water management projects, floodplain protection, permitting, inspection, and enforcement activities.

It is important to recognize that some of the actions identified in this plan element will require additional staff or resources to implement. In particular, preparation of the WPDES Storm Water Permit will likely require additional resources. Therefore, a dedicated funding source(s) should be established to ensure consistent and sufficient funding is available to implement the stormwater management program.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Assess Staff and Funding Needs.** The City shall determine staffing and funding requirements necessary to develop and implement a storm water management program, as required to obtain a WPDES Stormwater Permit.
2. **Storm Water Project Funding.** The City shall identify possible funding sources available to implement storm water management projects and efforts, including floodplain protection projects. The appropriate funding strategy may differ for different types of projects. For example, storm water projects done in conjunction with development or redevelopment projects could be funded through permit fees, whereas, general, citywide projects would likely require other funding sources, or grants. Possible funding sources include:
 - General Fund
 - Taxation
 - Assessments
 - Surface Water Utility (City would need to create)
 - Revenue Bonds
 - Grants
 - Tax Increment Financing
 - Permit Fees

Implementation Program

This section describes the major actions involved in implementing the Public Utilities plan element. Table 9-3 is intended to guide City staff and the Common Council in setting priorities for capital budgeting and staff allocation. It is expected that this table will be reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, to establish new priorities.

Priority ranking is defined as follows:

- 1 = highest or short-term priority
- 2 = secondary or mid-term priority
- 3 = lowest priority or represents on-going activities

Table 9-3: Implementation Actions for Sanitary Sewer and Water Systems

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	Annexation Policy. Follow annexation policy to only extend utilities outside present City border in exchange for annexation or per an approved boundary agreement.	City Council Planning Department Water & Sewer Utilities Office Public Works Department
1	System Modeling. Model sewer system to identify and evaluate deficiencies.	Water & Sewer Utilities Office Public Works Department
1	System Mapping. Complete digital mapping of utility system.	Public Works Department Water & Sewer Utilities Office
1	Utility Extension Criteria. Update and adopt review and approval criteria and standards for utility system extensions and improvements.	Planning Department Public Works Department Water & Sewer Utilities Office City Council
2	Wellhead Protection. Establish Wellhead Protection overlay zoning district and associated development standards for identified protection areas.	Planning Department Public Works Department Water & Sewer Utilities Office City Council
2	Public Education. Engage in public education efforts to inform residents and business owners about wellhead protection.	Public Works Department Water & Sewer Utilities Office
2	Evaluate Costs and Benefits. Evaluate costs to construct system extensions or improvements relative to benefits from revenue and non-economic benefits.	Public Works Department Water & Sewer Utilities Office

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
3	Impacts of Utility Expansions. Continue to analyze and monitor changes in water and sewer user rates, operating expenses, and level of service impacts of utility expansions.	Water & Sewer Utilities Office Public Works Department City Council
3	System Maintenance. Continue planned enhancement, maintenance and rehabilitation of utility systems.	Water & Sewer Utilities Office Public Works Department City Council
3	Regulatory Contacts. Develop and maintain working relationships with regulatory agencies.	Public Works Department Water & Sewer Utilities Office
3	Professional Organizations. Actively network and participate in professional organizations serving water and sewer industries.	Public Works Department Water & Sewer Utilities Office

Table 9-4: Implementation Actions for the Surface Water Management

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	WPDES Permit. Obtain a Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Storm Water Permit	Water & Sewer Utilities Office Public Works Department Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources City Council
1	Develop and Implement Surface Water Management Plan. Develop a surface water management plan that meets the requirements of WPDES and dedicate appropriate staff to implement the plan.	Public Works Department Water & Sewer Utilities Office City Council Planning Department
1	Dedicated Funding. Create a dedicated funding source for implementing the storm water management program and floodplain protection projects.	City Council Water & Sewer Utilities Office Public Works Department
1 and 3	Adopt, Enforce, and Monitor BMPs. Update development standards to incorporate BMPs and dedicate sufficient staff resources to enforce BMP implementation and monitor performance on an ongoing basis.	Planning Department Water & Sewer Utilities Office Public Works Department Plan Commission City Council

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
2	System Modeling. Model storm water system to identify problem areas and prioritize possible corrective actions.	Water & Sewer Utilities Office Public Works Department Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Planning Department
2	Establish Measurable Objectives. Develop and adopt quantifiable objectives for managing surface water runoff and evaluating BMP effectiveness.	Public Works Department City Council Planning Department Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
3	Floodplain Protection. Develop and evaluate options to protect properties located in the floodplain.	Public Works Department Planning Department City Council Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Army Corps of Engineers
3	Correct System Problems. Utilize BMPs and other means to correct storm water system problems.	Water & Sewer Utilities Office Public Works Department

Appendix A

Water Quality Best Management Practices

The following techniques, sometimes known as Best Management Practices (BMPs), should be used in conjunction with one another to improve treatment of water quality. All techniques have benefits but cannot do the entire job. Such systems may include multiple management options, ranging from street sweeping and structures to open space and litter control laws. Although storm water ponds and wetland treatment systems are most often the tools for treatment and storage of urban runoff, they are only some of the tools in this process.

Determining the most appropriate BMPs to use in any situation should be based on achieving the following priorities:

1. Avoid adverse impacts.
2. Minimize unavoidable adverse impacts.
3. Mitigate unavoidable adverse impacts

Construction Site Surface Water Management

Runoff Control

- Minimize Clearing
- Preserve Natural Vegetation
- Install Construction Entrance (i.e., gravel area at site entrance)
- Stabilize Drainageways

Sediment Control

- Install Perimeter Controls (e.g., silt fence)
- Storm Drain Inlet Protection
- Install Sediment Trapping Devices
- Stabilize Exposed Soils
- Protect Steep Slopes
- Protect Waterways
- Phase Construction

Good Housekeeping

- Spill Prevention and Control Plan
- Designated Vehicle Maintenance and Washing Areas
- Contractor Certification and Inspector Training
- BMP Inspection and Maintenance

Post-Construction Surface Water Management

Structural BMPs

- Wet or Dry Extended Detention Ponds
- Infiltration Basin or Trench
- Porous Pavement
- Bioretention
- Sand and Organic Filters
- Grassed Swales
- Grassed Filter Strip
- In-line Sediment Traps or Storage
- Skimmer and separators
- Filtration Catch Basins/Manholes

Nonstructural BMPs

- Alum Injection (removes suspended sediments)
- Buffer Zones
- Conservation Easements
- Open Space Design
- Narrower Residential Streets
- Eliminating Curb and Gutter
- Comprehensive Storm Water Management Plans
- Erosion-control Ordinances
- Pet Ordinances
- Fertilizer and Pesticide Controls or Ordinances
- BMP Inspection and Maintenance

Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

Source Controls

- Vehicle Washing
- Landscaping and Lawn Care
- Parking Lot and Street Cleaning
- Storm Drain System Cleaning
- Monitoring programs
- Spill response and prevention

Materials Management

- Hazardous Materials Storage
- Road Salt Application and Storage
- Used Oil Recycling
- Deicing Fluid Recovery

Illicit Discharge Detection & Elimination

- Failing Septic Systems
- Industrial/Business Connections

- Recreational Sewage
- Sanitary Sewer Overflows
- Identify Illicit Connections
- Wastewater Connections to the Storm Drain System
- Illegal Dumping

Public Education & Outreach

Information Topics

- Use Environmentally Friendly Landscape Techniques
- Water Conservation Measures
- Proper Hazardous Household Waste Disposal
- Proper Pet Waste Disposal
- Recycling and Waste Disposal
- Erosion Control Measures
- Illicit Dumping and Littering
- Source Reduction
- Energy Recovery
- Low Impact Design Techniques

Outreach Techniques

- Educational Displays, Pamphlets, Booklets and Utility Stuffers
- Promotional Giveaways
- Classroom Education

Public Involvement & Participation

Activities/Public Participation

- Storm Drain Stenciling
- Stream Cleanup & Monitoring
- Volunteer Monitoring
- Reforestation Programs
- Wetland Plantings
- Adopt-A-Stream Program
- Awards and Public Recognition Program

Involvement/Public Opinion

- Watershed Organization
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Attitude Surveys
- Community Hotlines

Appendix B

Techniques to Measure the Effectiveness of Best Management Practices

The following list identifies hypothetical examples of techniques to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of various Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Public Education & Outreach

- The number of educational materials distributed to schools.
- The number of educational materials distributed to business owners and operators.
- The number of certified businesses that participated in training.
- The number of materials created and distributed.
- The number of partnerships established with lawn care businesses.
- The number of municipal employees trained in proper lawn care practices.
- A survey of homeowners about lawn care behavior before and after message(s) is delivered.
- The number of new site plans that incorporate low impact development principles and practices.
- The number of municipal-owned facilities that are retrofitted with low impact development practices.
- Whether or not a pet waste ordinance was developed.
- The number of "clean up after your pet" signs posted in parks and neighborhoods.
- The number of posters/brochures put up in pet supply stores.
- The pounds of household hazardous waste collected
- The mass of trash removed from conveyance systems and receiving waters during cleanup campaigns.
- Whether or not a litter ordinance was established.
- The number of public service announcements made on radio and television.
- The number of storm-water-related articles published
- The number of water conservation utility inserts that are distributed with utility bills.
- A survey of homeowners about their water conservation behavior before and after the message is delivered.

Public Involvement and Participation

- Track the number of participants in Adopt-A-Stream programs.
- The quantity of trash and debris removed by Adopt-A-Stream volunteers.
- A survey of citizens gauging change in attitude/behavior after Surface Water education activities are held.
- The number of calls received by hotlines.
- The number of problems/incidents remedied as a result of hotline calls.
- The number of volunteer tree planters.
- The number of trees planted.

- The number of storm drains stenciled.
- The number of stream cleanups.
- The quantity of waste collected as a result of cleanup efforts.
- The number of stream miles cleaned.
- The number of volunteers participating in monitoring programs.
- The frequency of monitoring in the watershed.

Construction Site Surface Water Management

- The frequency of inspection and maintenance of BMPs.
- The number of sites inspected.
- Whether or not an ordinance was developed to address construction site runoff control.

Post Construction Surface Water Management

- The number of new bioretention cells installed (both commercial and residential).
- The number of acres that are drained by bioretention cells.
- Whether or not development codes were changed to require buffer zones.
- The acreage of land conserved as buffers.
- The number of catch basins retrofitted with filtering devices.
- The quantity of sediment removed from catch basins.
- Whether or not development codes were modified.
- The number of new developments using Surface Water BMPs.
- Whether or not development codes were modified to allow narrower streets.
- The reduction in impervious surface area from narrower streets.
- Whether or not an ordinance was developed to address post-construction runoff.
- The projected amount of impervious cover reduced under the new ordinance.
- Whether or not development codes were modified.
- The amount of open space protected with new zoning codes.

Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

- The number of employees trained in hazardous material storage and maintenance.
- The number of materials distributed educating citizens on home storage of hazardous materials.
- The number of stores/gardens participating in education program.
- The number of people trained in safe landscaping, lawn care, and pest management techniques.
- The number of classes/seminars offered in landscaping and lawn care.
- The number of educational materials distributed.
- The number of scheduled road and parking lot cleanings.
- The pounds of debris collected from street and parking lot sweeping.
- The number of storage facilities included in a regular inspection and maintenance program.
- The quantity of salt applied to roadways.
- The quantity of alternative products used.

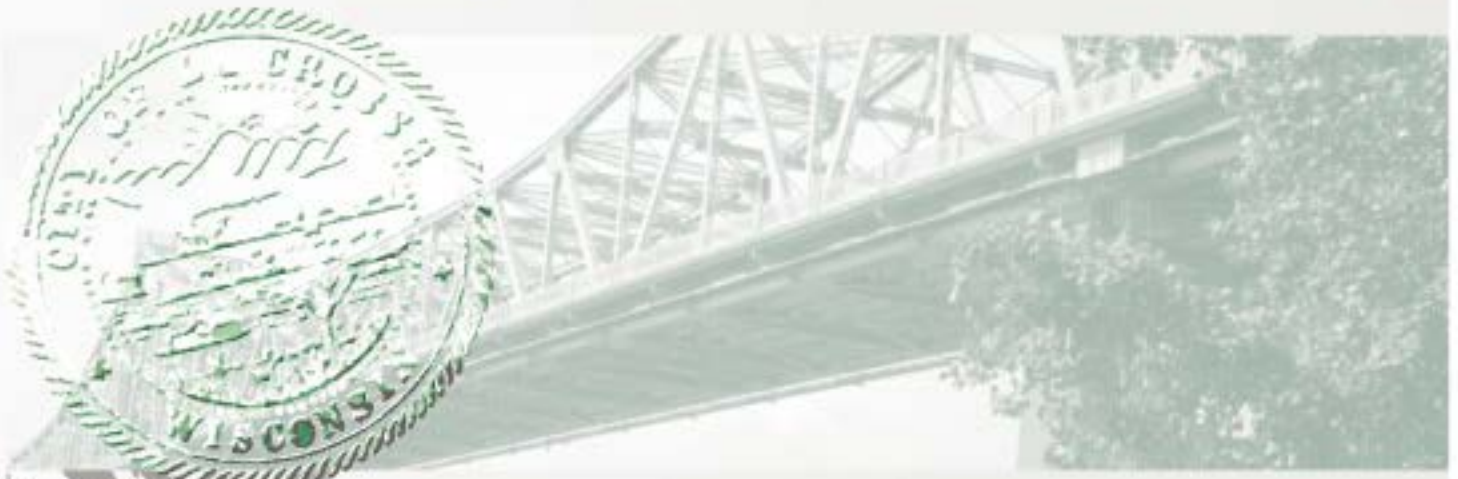
- The water quality at outfalls near downstream of storage facilities.
- The number of catch basins at construction sites that are cleaned regularly.
- Whether or not an inventory of municipal facilities at risk for spills was created.
- The number of leak detection devices installed at municipal facilities.
- The number of preventative maintenance procedures performed on tanks, valves, pumps, pipes, and other equipment.
- Whether or not a spill response plan was developed for municipal facilities.
- Whether or not areas with high pollutant loadings were inventoried and prioritized for cleaning.
- The length of storm drainpipe cleaned regularly.

Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination

- The number of regular maintenance and inspection reminders issued to septic system owners.
- Whether or not an inventory of septic systems, and when they were last serviced was completed.
- Inventory of illicit connections conducted and sites prioritized for inspection.
- Whether or not an ordinance was developed to allow entrance into private buildings for the purpose of conducting illicit connection tests.
- The number of illicit connections reported by business employees.
- The number of illicit connections found.
- The number of illicit connections repaired/replaced.
- The number of illegal dumps reported by citizens.
- The number of penalties enforced upon the participants of illegal dumps.
- Whether or not an inventory of the prime areas for illegal dumping was completed.

Confluence:

The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

10.0 Community Facilities Plan Element

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Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES ISSUES	1
Fire Facilities and Service.....	1
Police Services	2
Library System	2
School District.....	3
GUIDANCE FROM THE CONCEPT PLAN	4
OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN	5
Summary of Community Facilities Objectives	6
COMMUNITY FACILITIES OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	7
FIRE FACILITIES AND SERVICES.....	7
POLICE FACILITIES AND SERVICES.....	9
LIBRARY FACILITIES AND SERVICES	12
SCHOOL SYSTEM FACILITIES AND SERVICES	14
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM	19

List of Figures

FIGURE 10-1 FIRE AND POLICE FACILITIES	9
FIGURE 10-2 COMMUNITY FACILITIES	17

List of Tables

TABLE 10-1: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES	19
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Community Facilities Plan Element

Community facilities, including fire service, police service, libraries, and public schools enhance the quality of life of a city. In La Crosse, many of these facilities were constructed years ago, when the City was geographically smaller. As the City has grown in size and changed in demographic make-up, issues have arisen regarding access to services, location and quality of facilities, need for new facilities and maintenance of existing facilities. Addressing these issues is necessary to maintain and improve the quality of life in La Crosse.

The Community Facilities Plan focuses on efforts the City and its partners, particularly, La Crosse County and the School District, can make to maintain and enhance public services and facilities.

Summary of Community Facilities Issues

The objectives and actions recommended in this plan are intended to address the issues identified in the Issues and Conditions Report of *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan*. Issues were identified through input received from a citywide survey, VisionFest, multiple meetings with the Citizens Advisory Committee, meetings with department representatives, and other sources. The following issues were identified:

Fire Facilities and Service

The location of existing fire stations has resulted in the overlap of service areas on the North Side. Likewise, more recent growth of the City to the south has raised questions about whether the far southern portion of the City has adequate fire service.

- Should Station #2 be closed and Station #4 be expanded to eliminate the service area overlap in North La Crosse?
- Should La Crosse build a new fire station in the far southern portion of the City to better serve existing development, and in anticipation of further development?
- How far out should the City and the Fire Department plan for the addition of new facilities? If new facilities are deemed necessary, are there opportunities to provide multiple municipal services from one site?

Police Services

The La Crosse Police Department identified a number of issues they need to address in the near future.

- How will the Department address its current lack of space (separate office, new storage site, etc.)?
- How can the Department provide better service to the southern portion of La Crosse (Community Policing Center, storage/office, etc.)?
- What role can the Police Department play in revitalizing neighborhoods within the City?

Library System

Like fire stations, the City's existing libraries are located in the older areas of the City. As a result, there are no libraries in the far southern part of La Crosse. The existing libraries were designed as walk-up facilities and don't provide a lot of parking. This is especially an issue at the Main Library in downtown. In addition, national trends towards increased use of electronic media, lower overall circulation, and increased provision of amenities, such as coffee shops, will influence the La Crosse Public Library system over the next twenty years.

- How can access to libraries be enhanced and the need for off-street parking reduced (shared parking, on-street parking, transit service, etc.)?
- Is a new library needed in southern La Crosse and if so, can it be used to enhance access to library materials and alleviate storage shortages throughout the library system? Are there opportunities for a joint-use if a new facility is deemed appropriate?
- Will increased use of electronic media reduce the space required for books and increase space needed for computers at library facilities? Will it result in decreased facility visits, thereby reducing need for additional parking spaces?
- Should public libraries provide amenities, such as a coffee shop or retail bookstore? If so, who should own and operate them?
- How will the La Crosse Public Library System meet facility and storage needs over the next twenty plus years?

School District

As neighborhood demographics have shifted, a mismatch has begun to occur between the location of schools and student populations. As a result, more students live farther away from school, which makes walking to school less feasible. Population shifts have also resulted in inadequate capacity at some schools. However, limited land supply, prudent use of existing school facilities, and declining enrollments give rise to questions about the feasibility of building new schools.

- Will population growth and limited capacity at existing schools result in the need for new school facilities? If so, where should they be located? Given limited land for new school facilities, can existing schools be expanded to sufficiently meet the school district's space needs?
- What can be done to improve access to schools?
- Is the mismatch between the location of school facilities and student populations one that requires immediate action (such as the construction or closing of facilities), or is it a phenomenon that is more cyclical in nature and can be addressed through other means (busing, etc.)?
- What role can the schools play in revitalizing neighborhoods (community services, etc.)? How do schools contribute to or detract from neighborhood livability (i.e., does student parking affect neighborhoods)?
- Are there opportunities for the School District and Parks Department to collaborate to provide joint use of facilities (e.g., gyms, ball fields, meeting rooms)?

Guidance from the Concept Plan

The Concept Plan for *Confluence: The City of La Crosse Comprehensive Plan* focuses on neighborhood revitalization. It emphasizes building on existing assets through focused improvements and better utilization of existing facilities and services. The Concept Plan provides this direction regarding community public services and facilities:

- **Community Focal Points:** Public buildings such as schools, libraries, city hall, the La Crosse Center, and neighborhood centers should be used to focus and enhance private development. Special attention should be paid to the quality of design of community facilities to ensure they contribute to the character and livability of neighborhoods.
- **Shared Use:** There should be more shared use of schools for community meetings, activities, and events, within the budget and operational limitations of the school district.
- **Protect Existing Investments:** The City should give priority to the maintenance and enhancement of existing public and private investments over investments in new facilities on the fringe of the City.
- **County Facilities:** Major County facilities (e.g., libraries, museums, service centers) should be located in the City of La Crosse to encourage compact regional growth and reinforce the City as the cultural and governmental heart of the region.

Overview of Community Facilities Plan

The Community Facilities Plan provides a framework to address current and anticipated issues affecting the Fire Department, Public Library System, School District, and Police Department. The following recommendations focus on actions the City can take to improve community facilities and service delivery to enhance the quality of life in La Crosse. Because there are common issues affecting all the community facilities, several of the actions apply to all community facilities and services.

Community facilities and services are directly or indirectly related to items covered in the other elements of *Confluence*. For example, the school system is affected by land use, the transportation network, the park and open space system, neighborhood revitalization efforts, and intergovernmental cooperation. Many of the same ties exist for the La Crosse Public Library. The Police and Fire Departments are also affected by such things as land use, the transportation network, and intergovernmental cooperation, among others. Therefore, the actions described in this plan element must be coordinated with recommendations in the other elements.

In addition, the actions described herein must also coordinate with recommendations in the master plans prepared for each of the community facilities. These master plans address issues and inadequacies specific to each public facility or service and plan for specific changes and improvements. Current plans include:

- La Crosse Public Library Strategic Plan (approved by Board of Trustees, 2000)
- La Crosse Fire Department Strategic Plan, 2000
- La Crosse Police Department Plan (summary)
- School District of La Crosse Board of Education Long Range Plan 2000 (March 2000)
- Enrollment Study (in progress) - the School District's Enrollment Management Task Force is currently studying enrollment and related impacts on facilities and programs

Summary of Community Facilities Objectives

The community facilities objectives are summarized below:

Objective 1: Fire Facilities and Services. Ensure provision of adequate fire protection services to residents and businesses in La Crosse.

Objective 2: Police Facilities and Services. Foster a high level of police service through the provision of adequate facilities and enhanced community-oriented policing efforts.

Objective 3: Library Facilities and Services. Foster the provision of adequate library facilities and services to all residents of La Crosse.

Objective 4: School District Facilities and Services. Foster socioeconomic balance in school enrollments, while fully utilizing classroom space and encouraging attendance at neighborhood schools.

Community Facilities Objectives and Actions

The objectives and actions described below focus on enhancing the quality of community facilities and service delivery.

Fire Facilities and Services

The City is currently served by four fire stations. Two are located north of the La Crosse River and two south of the La Crosse River (see Figure 10-1). Traditionally, fire service areas have been defined to include the area within a 1½-mile radius from the station. Stations #2 and #4 have a significant degree of overlap in their service areas. On the other hand, some portions of the far northeastern and southern portions of the City are outside the 1½ -mile service radius of any station.

Today, fire service areas are increasingly defined by travel times rather than distance. The current standard is for 90 percent of all fire calls to be accessible within six minutes. The La Crosse Fire Department also responds to medical emergencies, supplementing the existing private ambulance service in the area. In addition, the Fire Department responds to calls regarding hazardous materials.

Objective 1: Fire Facilities and Service. Ensure provision of adequate fire protection services to residents and businesses in La Crosse.

One of the goals of the Fire Department is to provide fire protection service to all areas in the City in accordance with national service standards, which recommend that 90% of all fire calls can be answered within six minutes. The ability to meet this standard is directly related to the location of station houses and access to the City’s transportation network. As the City expands around the northeast and southeast edges of the bluffs in the Highway B and Highway 14-61 corridors and development is located farther from existing stations, meeting this standard will become more difficult.



Gillete Street Fire Station on North side

Policies/Actions:

1. **Evaluate Facility Locations.** The City shall regularly (every 5 to 10 years) evaluate the location of the Fire stations to ensure adequate fire protection service is available to all areas of the City. The Fire Department shall also develop a procedure to evaluate proposed station openings or closings and subsequent impacts on national service standards.

The Fire Department has indicated that it has difficulty meeting service standards in the far southern portion of the City, because of the distance from the nearest fire station. It is expected that meeting service standards will become more difficult as the City continues to expand to the east along Highway 14/61. Regular analysis, such as timed runs, will allow the department to identify where service is declining before it becomes a significant problem. Analysis has also shown that the service areas for Fire Station #2 and Fire Station #4 on the City's north side have a significant overlap.

2. **Shared Sites.** The City shall continue to explore opportunities to develop a new shared police, fire, and library facility in the southern portion of the City.








The La Crosse Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Library System have all indicated that a facility is desired in the southern portion of the City in order to provide better service to the residents of this portion of the City. If it is decided that new facilities should be built, the City should attempt to find a site that will allow these facilities to be located on one site if possible. If the selected site does not allow good bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access, the City should work to locate a combined facility for the Fire and Police Department, and locate a separate, more accessible site for a Library facility.

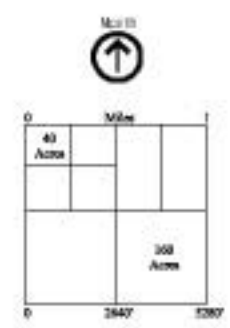
3. **Access.** The Fire Department, in conjunction with the Public Works Department shall continually evaluate the City's transportation network to determine whether there are any impediments to access that may hinder the provision of fire protection and emergency vehicle service.

Good access is crucial to provide fire service in a timely manner. Luckily, La Crosse has a highly interconnected network of streets. However, care should be taken to balance the need for service vehicle access with the creation of pedestrian friendly environments that incorporate narrow residential streets and traffic calming devices (e.g., corner bump-outs, traffic circles).

Figure 10-1
Fire and
Police
Facilities



-  Municipal Boundary
-  City of La Crosse
-  Water
-  Railroads
-  Roads
-  Police Station
-  Fire Station



City of
La Crosse
Comprehensive
Plan

Police Facilities and Services

The La Crosse Police Department is housed in two stations: the main police station located downtown in City Hall and the Northside Community Policing Center on St. James Street. These facilities are shown on Figure 10-1. The Police Department has a staff of 99 sworn officers and 22 civilians. Insufficient space at the City Hall headquarters is a concern. To become more proactive in crime prevention and increase police presence in neighborhoods, the Police Department is becoming more involved in Community Oriented Policing and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design strategies.

Objective 2: Police Facilities and Services. Foster a high level of police service through the provision of adequate facilities and enhanced community-oriented policing efforts.



Northside Community Policing Center

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Facility Capacity Needs.** The Police Department shall continue to evaluate options to address the need for additional work and storage space.

The La Crosse Police Department currently has offices located in City Hall in downtown La Crosse, as well as at the Northside Community Policing Center, which is used as a substation. There has been some consideration of direct deployment of officers from this facility. The Department has indicated that it has exceeded both the work and storage capacities of its space at City Hall. Future facility options include:

- Creation of storage facilities;
- Creation of a new substation in south La Crosse; and
- Use of mobile computing to reduce needs at the present facilities

If the City chooses to construct a substation to serve southern La Crosse, all efforts shall be made to create a facility large enough to house fire department, police department, and possibly library facilities.

2. **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).** The City shall work to incorporate CPTED principles into its development reviews and public facilities design.
3. **Neighborhood Patrols.** The City shall increase police officer presence via foot, bicycle, and squad car patrols, especially in neighborhoods with higher crime rates.

This action complements the Department’s Community Oriented Policing (COP) philosophy of decentralizing police services as well as CPTED efforts.

Library Facilities and Services

La Crosse has three public libraries: the Main Library located downtown, the North Side Branch and South Side Branch. The library system has been a City department since 1981. As with the fire stations, the expansion of the City to the south has created an under-served area in the far southern portion of the City. Efforts have been made to address this service deficiency through use of bookmobiles and the Youth Outreach Direct Access (YODA) van. Figure 10-2 illustrates the location of libraries and schools.

Objective 3: Library Facilities and Services. Foster the provision of high-quality and convenient library facilities and services to residents of La Crosse.

La Crosse libraries provide educational opportunities, computing facilities, historical archives, and serve as community meeting places. In order to serve all members of the community, public libraries should be accessible by foot, bicycle, transit, and automobile.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Parking.** The City shall explore ways to increase off-street and on-street parking at the Main Library facility. Options could include:
 - Expanding parking hours on 9th Street;
 - Expanding off-street parking lot space;
 - Providing more transit service to the library;
 - Reduce demand at the Main Library by providing additional services at the other two branches, or providing more service at the point of need using mobile units
2. **New Library Facilities.** The City shall identify potential sites for a new facility in the southern portion of La Crosse. If possible, the City should attempt to identify a site that will allow for the location of Fire and Police Department facilities as well. The City should also evaluate whether exiting facilities such as the Southern Bluffs Library Media Center in Southern Bluffs Elementary could be used to provide service to southern La Crosse.

All three of the public library facilities were located at their current sites on or prior to 1952. Since that time, the City has expanded significantly to the south/southeast. It is anticipated that new population growth will continue eastward on the Highway 14/61 corridor. The La Crosse Public Library system has attempted to provide service through the YODA van and bookmobile, but would like a permanent facility to serve the residents of southern La Crosse.

3. **Library Storage Space.** The City shall continue to explore opportunities to expand library storage space, either in conjunction with construction of a new library facility or through expansion of existing library facilities.

Library administrators have indicated that within 20 years they will begin to experience problems due to insufficient facility and storage space. The construction of a new library in the far south side of La Crosse could help to alleviate these concerns. However, if a new library is not constructed, additional space should be built at one of the three current sites.

4. **Amenities.** The City shall evaluate library improvements such as coffee shops and bookstores.

The 1990s saw significant increases in the amount of amenities offered by public libraries throughout the country, from coffee shops to bookstores, computing facilities, lounges, and other complementary uses. The La Crosse Public Library Strategic Plan (2000) indicated a desire to provide improved and enhanced ambience at library facilities.



South Community Library

School System Facilities and Services

The La Crosse School District consists of 11 public elementary schools (kindergarten through grade 5), three middle schools (grades 6-8), and two high schools (grades 9-12). These facilities serve approximately 7,500 students from the City and all, or parts of the Towns of Medary, Shelby, Campbell, Bergen, Greenfield, Hamburg, and Washington. In addition, there are 16 private schools (mostly elementary) serving approximately 1,700 students. School facilities are shown on Figure 10-2.

Objective 4: School Facilities and Services. Foster socioeconomic balance in school enrollments while fully utilizing classroom space and encouraging attendance at neighborhood schools.

Overall School District enrollment has fallen since its peak in the early 1970s. As of September 2001, the School District had about 7,500 students enrolled, including students enrolled in the early childhood, Exceptional Educational Need, and preschool programs. Based on School District projections, enrollment is expected to drop slightly over the next several years. However, populations of school aged children tend to be cyclical, and the School District will likely see a rebound or increase in enrollment over the next twenty years.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Growth and New School Facilities.** The City and the School District shall work to identify areas of new growth and evaluate whether that growth will have significant impacts on existing facilities, or whether it will create the need for new facilities.

The School District's Enrollment Management Task Force is studying ways to achieve balance in enrollment levels, socioeconomic levels, and program offerings. The findings of this study should be incorporated into the evaluation and decision-making process regarding new facilities. In the case that new facilities are required, an emphasis should be placed on quality of construction, and flexibility of use. New facilities should be discouraged in areas outside of the City limit, to encourage use of existing school facilities and help the City in its efforts to redevelop existing neighborhoods.

- 2. Neighborhood Revitalization.** The City and School District should continue to work together to revitalize neighborhoods through the Neighborhood Restore Everybody's Neighborhood Effectively and Win (RENEW) program, as these efforts will be mutually beneficial to both parties.

The presence of schools contributes to the character and livability of neighborhoods, and therefore can benefit neighborhood revitalization. In turn, healthy, vital neighborhoods benefit the schools located within them. For example, neighborhood revitalization can help the School District improve socioeconomic balance within its schools without having to change school boundaries or bus students.



Logan High School

3. **School Access.** The City and School District shall evaluate access to individual schools. It is important that all schools are safely accessible by foot or bicycle in addition to transit and automobiles.
4. **School Building Demolition.** The City and School District should develop policies prohibiting the demolition of neighborhood schools unless deemed to be in the best interest of the neighborhood and community. Alternatives to school demolition should be evaluated before making such decisions.

National trends have indicated an increased preference for neighborhood schools, especially for elementary students. While cyclical demographic changes may reduce the number of students living near a particular school at any one time, these school buildings are still valuable neighborhood assets. They contribute to neighborhood identity, serve as community meeting places, and provide neighborhood recreation facilities in addition to providing their educational roles. Given limited land in the City, it is especially important to retain existing school sites, as finding land to construct new facilities is extremely difficult once an area has been developed.

5. **Joint Services and Facility Sharing.** The City and School District shall continue to explore opportunities to work cooperatively with the La Crosse Public Library System, the City Parks and Recreation Department, and neighborhood and community organizations to share facilities and provide joint services where mutually beneficial.

Efforts should be made to expand public use of school facilities, especially during the summer months. The City and School District should also work together to enhance community use of schools. If necessary, outside sources of funding should be obtained

to allow for increased use of public school facilities without detriment to school operations.

6. Parking. The City and the School District shall coordinate efforts to discourage students from driving to school. Such efforts could include:

- Limiting the number of students eligible to park at school,
- Establishing parking permit zones around schools and charging a fee for parking permits, or
- Restricting on-street parking for non-residents during certain hours.

Student traffic has become a significant issue for many residents living close to the high schools as more students drive to school, resulting in more traffic and parking problems.

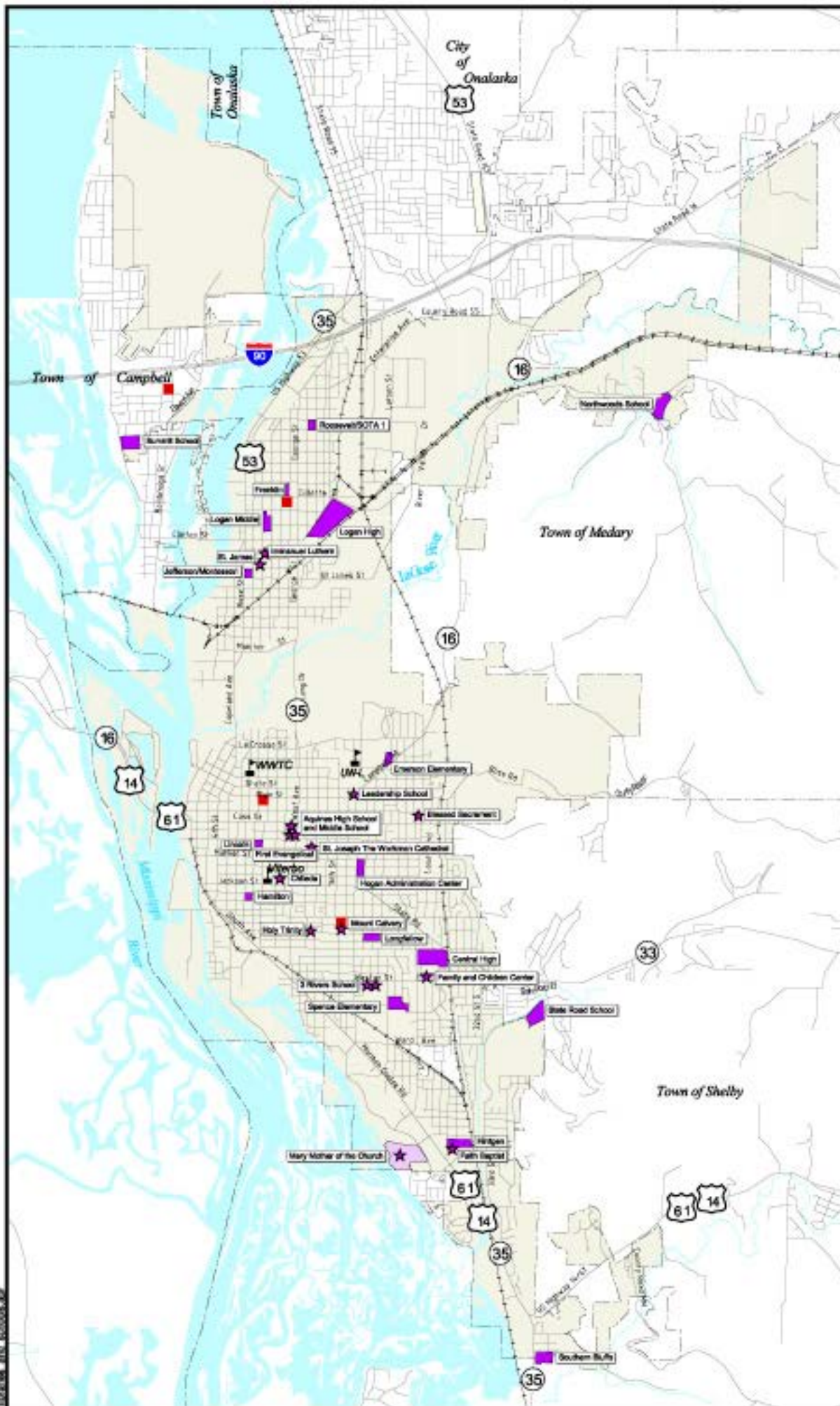
7. Intergovernmental Coordination. The City shall work to improve its working relationship with the school board, administration, and teachers, especially with regard to Project RENEW.

Over the years the City and School District have had a strained relationship, in part due to City’s previous role as the “fiscal control board” for the School District. The City should make annual formal presentations to the school board on neighborhood revitalization and begin a long term and continual dialog with the School District of La Crosse. The City should also work with the School District to address parking issues, and work with the Municipal Transit Utility and School District to provide transit passes for high school students in order to discourage student driving.

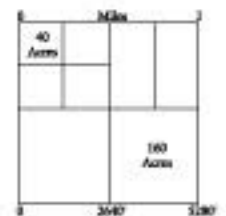


Central High School

**Figure 10-2
Libraries
and
Schools**



- Municipal Boundary
- City of La Crosse
- Water
- Railroads
- Roads
- Library
- University or College
- Public Schools
- Private Schools



**City of
La Crosse**
*Comprehensive
Plan*

Implementation Program

This section describes the major actions involved in implementing the Community Facilities plan element. The table is intended to guide City staff and the Common Council in setting priorities for capital budgeting and staff allocation. It is expected that this table will be reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, to establish new priorities.

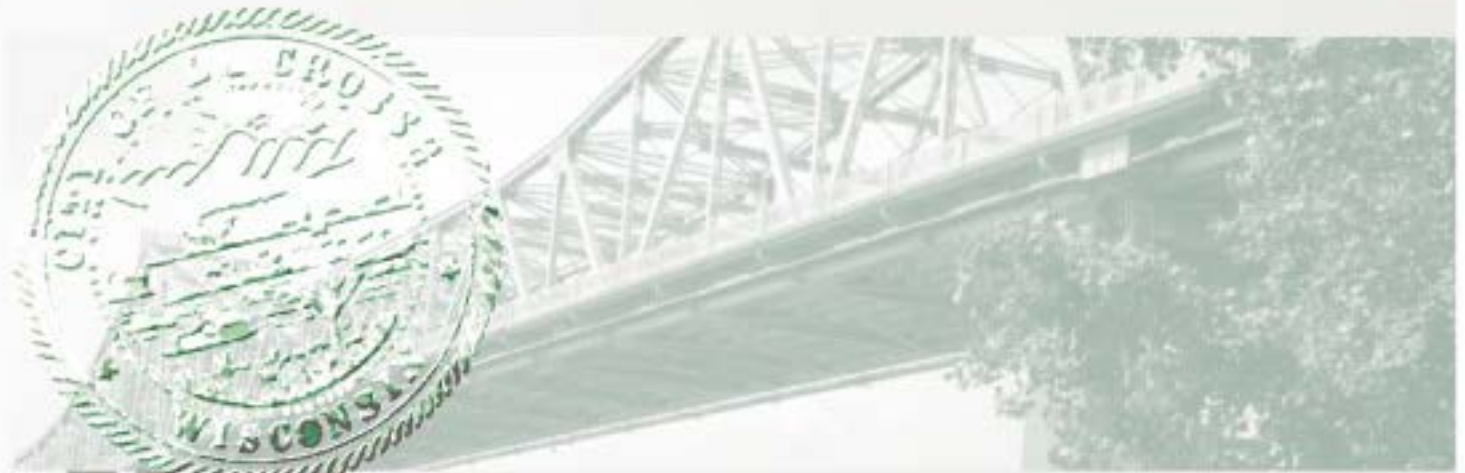
Priority ranking is defined as follows:

- 1 = highest or short-term priority
- 2 = secondary or mid-term priority
- 3 = lowest priority or represents on-going activities

Table 10-1: Implementation Actions for Community Facilities

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	New Library and/or Shared Facility. Continue to explore potential sites for a new library in the southern part of La Crosse. If possible, identify a site that will allow for fire and police facilities as well.	Planning Department Police Department Fire Department Plan Commission Common Council
1	New Schools. Work with the School District to identify areas of new growth and evaluate the need for new facilities to meet new demands.	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council School District
2	Neighborhood Patrols. Increase police officer presence via foot, bicycle, and squad car patrols, especially in neighborhoods with higher crime rates.	Police Department Common Council
2	Shared Facilities. Continue to explore opportunities to share facilities and provide joint services where mutually beneficial to the School District, Library System, Parks Department, and community organizations.	Parks Department Library Staff School District Common Council
3	Capacity and Storage Needs. Continue to evaluate the spatial and storage capacity of libraries, police and fire stations.	Library Staff Fire Department Police Department Common Council
3	Evaluate Fire Station Locations. Regularly evaluate fire station locations to ensure adequate fire protection service is available to all areas of the City.	Fire Department Common Council

Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

11.0 Economic Development Plan Element

URS

Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES	2
LAND AVAILABILITY.....	2
LIVING WAGE EMPLOYMENT.....	2
TECHNOLOGY SECTOR KEY TO THE FUTURE	2
CONTINUED RESTRUCTURING AWAY FROM MANUFACTURING	3
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AS INCUBATOR	3
OVERALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	3
PROVIDE PROPER BALANCE BETWEEN COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/ RESIDENTIAL LAND USES....	4
BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT OF OTHER UNDERUTILIZED SITES	4
COMPETITION FROM OTHER AREA COMMUNITIES/CREATION OF COULEE REGION INDUSTRIAL PARK CORPORATION CRIPCO.....	4
BRAIN DRAIN.....	5
GUIDANCE FROM CONCEPT PLAN.....	6
OVERVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN ELEMENT	8
SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES	8
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS.....	10
OVERALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	10
REDEVELOPMENT	13
LIVING WAGE EMPLOYMENT.....	19
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM.....	23

List of Figures

Figure 11-1 Revitalization Study Areas.....	15
Figure 11-2 Industrial Parks	21

List of Tables

TABLE 11-1: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	23
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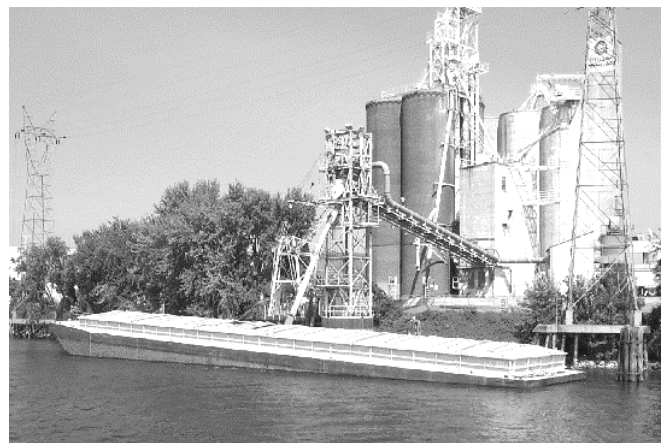
Economic Development Plan Element

Throughout its history, the La Crosse economy has changed and adapted to major economic events, such as the demise of the lumber industry and more recently, the decline in major manufacturing. The City has emerged as a community that has adapted to the “new” economy. While the community has endured the closing of major manufacturing enterprises over the years, such as Allis Chalmers and Autolite, the City recovered from such catastrophes with the emergence of such companies as La Crosse Footwear, Reinhart Foods, the G. Heileman Brewing Company, and Trane Company. In recent years, the City has been reminded that these companies themselves are not immune to the cyclical nature of the national and world economy or corporate buyouts.

At one time La Crosse was the retail trade hub for the surrounding trade area, which is typically described as a 50-mile radius. With the construction of Interstate 90 along the City’s northern border, retail development has moved north and concentrated along the freeway corridor. Over the last 20 years, the City has adjusted to this movement, but much work remains.

The City has been a major player in the local economy with its economic development programs and projects for numerous local companies. The City has provided assistance to many companies large and small including: La Crosse Footwear, Trane Company, City Brewery, Dura Tech, the People’s Food Coop, Buzzard Billy’s, and others. The City was instrumental in the creation of the Coulee Region Business Center and in creating three industrial parks. A fourth industrial park, the International Business Park, is now complete and several major employers now occupy the park. The creation of a regional airport should be viewed as a watershed event in improving the City’s economy and its link to national and international markets.

The economy in La Crosse is dependent on the availability of utilities and services, transportation and access, quality of life indicators such as parks and open space, educational facilities, housing availability and land availability. This Comprehensive Plan and the successful implementation of all its elements therefore, have a significant complementary relationship with the Economic Development plan element.



River-dependent industry has traditionally, and will continue to be an important part of the City’s economy

Summary of Economic Development Issues

The following is a summary of the major issues, or questions to be resolved, regarding economic development in La Crosse, that were outlined in the Conditions and Issues Report.

Land Availability

There is very little raw land for new industrial development within the City, even with the creation of the International Business Park. There are some small parcels of property within existing industrial areas that are underutilized.

- Are there areas of the City that are suitable for redevelopment as industrial/business sites?
- Should the City more proactively market small, underutilized parcels on behalf of the property owner?
- Should the City focus clean-up efforts or enforcement of appearance requirements found in the restrictive covenants as a means to make existing industrial areas more desirable for prospective purchasers?

Living Wage Employment

The results of the recently completed La Crosse and Houston County Compass 2 effort found that area residents are concerned about finding employment that pays a living wage. Additionally, the 2001 Needs Assessment by Coulee Community Action Program found that survey respondents felt wages are too low, and that it is difficult to find employment with health benefits. Further, respondents stated that they need to find training and educational programs that will assist them in starting their own businesses or that will assist them in getting a better job. The respondents also identified the cost of transportation and childcare as hindrances to attending school.

- What can the City do to promote employment sectors that provide jobs that pay a living wage?

Technology Sector Key to the Future

Employers are finding it hard to find workers with adequate technological skills. The City is a member of the recently created Technology Business Alliance and has been active since its inception.

- In addition to current efforts, what should the City be doing to promote and recruit job growth in the technology sector?
- How can the City assist the educational institutions in providing opportunities for training skilled workers?



First Logic – one of the City's high-tech employers

Continued Restructuring Away from Manufacturing

The City currently has a diversified economy that has helped buffer it from the decline in major manufacturing.

- How can the City best focus its efforts on emerging job trends while retaining or even recruiting manufacturing jobs?

Central Business District as Incubator

As a result of the *City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update* implementation efforts, downtown La Crosse has been the incubator for white-collar job growth in the last several years.

- What additional efforts (such as the Wisconsin Department of Commerce Development Zone Program) should be explored or expanded to solidify the regional significance of the historic central business district?

Overall Economic Development Strategy

At the Wisconsin Economic Summit held at the end of 2000, seven key topics were discussed to frame Wisconsin's future in the "New Economy." These topics include:

1. building quality jobs;
2. enlarging venture capital investment;
3. improving the regulatory climate;

4. educating the workforce;
 5. improving Wisconsin’s fiscal future and entrepreneurial climate;
 6. enhancing key infrastructure; and,
 7. building a distinctive image to position Wisconsin as a technology and fast-growing jobs leader.
- How can the City position itself within the State’s overall economic development strategy?
 - In light of the economic trends in the community, region, state and nation, should the City consider creating a more formal program that provides a concerted effort in economic development?

Provide Proper Balance between Commercial/Industrial/Residential Land Uses

- How can the City prevent the exodus of current and potential residents to the suburban communities without the concomitant loss of employers?

Brownfield Redevelopment and Redevelopment of other Underutilized Sites

With little raw land available for expansion of the City’s tax base and business and industry base, the City must position itself to redevelop existing “brownfield” sites. A prime example of the City’s forward thinking, pro-business posture in this arena is the redevelopment of the former LUXCO/Cargill Heating and Air Conditioning/Robers site into the \$30 million Midwest Regional Headquarters for CenturyTel. The project utilized Wisconsin Department of Commerce funds along with funds from the City and CenturyTel.

- Where should the City prioritize its redevelopment efforts?
- What criteria should be established to determine the level of public incentives for each development proposal?

Competition from other Area Communities/Creation of Coulee Region Industrial Park Corporation CRIPCO

The City has enjoyed and benefited from its relationship with the La Crosse Area Development Corporation (LADCO) and Excel Energy in the La Crosse Industrial Park Corporation. The creation of a county-wide entity that would engage in real estate acquisition and/or construction projects to facilitate industrial and commercial real estate development by using public and private dollars could force the City to work that much harder to stem the tide of development in the suburban areas.

- How can (or should) the City increase its economic development programs to keep pace with initiatives occurring outside the City?

Brain Drain

The issue of “brain drain” is a statewide issue but is also of local concern.

- How can the City assist in creating the type of jobs that attract and retain persons from the area as they enter the workforce?
- Having three institutions of higher learning produces high-quality employees, and the area has a leg up on such factors as quality of life, low-cost housing, and entertainment. To what extent can the City assist in providing an overall climate that competes with major metropolitan areas?



Roosevelt Plumbing Building – most recently ISOLA (recently closed)

Guidance from Concept Plan

The Concept Plan for *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan* was prepared with input from the Citizens Advisory Committee, VisionFest participants, community surveys and key-person interviews. The Concept Plan emphasizes an underlying theme of Neighborhood Revitalization.

The Concept Plan provides the following direction regarding economic development:

- **Competitive Position in the Region:** The City's competitive position in the coulee region should be sustained and enhanced by reinvestment and redevelopment in urbanized areas combined with protection of its quality of life features. Competition within the region should be minimized by focusing economic development activities into existing cities with urban services.
- **Good Jobs:** The City's economic development policy should promote the retention and capture of businesses that are high-paying, clean, have a high number of jobs per acre, use the local college-educated labor pool and leverage the natural characteristics of the area.
- **Redevelopment:** To the extent possible, redevelopment and recycling of property should be an element of the City's economic development program. A high percentage of new commercial and industrial growth should occur in the existing boundaries of La Crosse as brownfield clean up and redevelopment efforts open up development sites in the City.

The Concept Plan also notes several themes directly related to land use that also pertain to economic development issues. These include:

- **Strategic Redevelopment and Reinvestment:** Public policy should guide and redirect market forces to infill and redevelopment locations. Reinvestment needs within the City should be given priority over new land development and fringe growth. The City should place a high priority on creating incentives to stimulate private reinvestment in redevelopment, infill and pollution clean up throughout the City. Redevelopment activities should receive priority on the riverfront, in distressed neighborhoods and key activity centers.
- **Downtown Revitalization:** Downtown La Crosse should continue to be the priority focus of revitalization efforts with a strong emphasis on historic preservation. Downtown should continue to function as the regional center for office, government, and entertainment. Emphasis should be on vertically-mixed development, creating an attractive pedestrian environment, increased housing, day and night activities, river access and intensified land uses. Downtown should be enhanced by the extension of parkland along the river to the north and south.

- **Riverfront Enhancement:** Riverfront land use should focus on parks, housing, offices and river-dependent industries. Existing riverfront parks should be linked. An emphasis should be placed on creating more parks and open space. Public investments made to create such amenities can help attract new private development to the riverfront and the City in general.



New CenturyTel building adjacent to Riverside Park

Overview of the Economic Development Plan Element

La Crosse has been the driving center of economic activity in Western Wisconsin since before statehood. The City has weathered tough economic times and has always emerged with greater optimism for the future. In current times, the economy of the City has flourished as a result of positive actions of the City and others. This effort has produced beneficial results, but was without the benefit of a well-thought-out long-term strategy.

The Economic Development plan element presents an overall strategy directing both short-term and longer-term actions that support this Comprehensive Plan’s underlying philosophy of neighborhood redevelopment. It also sets forth the direction that the City will take to secure its place in the regional economy. By La Crosse continuing to be the leader in economic development, the entire region will benefit. La Crosse must build on its assets, including its physical setting, low crime rates, outstanding health-care facilities, moderate housing costs, high quality schools, recreational opportunities, an educated and skilled workforce, relatively low labor costs, and good accessibility.

Since the City has not had a coordinated approach to economic development, this plan element provides the overall framework for developing that coordinated approach. As such, this plan element is essentially a “plan to plan” rather than a description of the ultimate solutions for creating the City’s Economic Development toolbox.

Summary of Objectives

The economic development objectives are summarized below:

Objective 1: Economic Development Preparedness. The City will begin its formal economic development program with the preparation of an Economic Development Preparedness Plan.

Objective 2: Brain Drain. Work with the State of Wisconsin to develop specific strategies to solve statewide and regional “Brain Drain.”

Objective 3: Secure City’s Competitive Position within the Region. Use “Smart Growth” strategies to maintain the City’s leadership role in regional economic development.

Objective 4: Land Availability. Proactively seek out raw land for development for new industrial sites and parks.

Objective 5: Redevelopment of Brownfields and Underutilized Sites. Focus economic development activity on redevelopment of existing “brownfield” and underutilized properties in the City.

Objective 6: Central Business District Incubator. Promote the historic Central Business District as an incubator for white-collar job growth in the City.

Objective 7: Living Wage Employment. Work to improve job wages and benefits for residents through City public works contracts and by working with employers and employee groups.

Objective 8: Foster Technology Sector. Foster growth of technology industries in La Crosse and support efforts to continually improve technological skills in the labor force.

Objective 9: Promote Manufacturing Sector. Provide a balanced approach to economic development that encourages manufacturers to grow and do business in La Crosse.



**The former Mobil Oil Site (from *City Vision 2000 Master Plan*)
– a proposed site for riverfront redevelopment**

Economic Development Objectives and Actions

This section describes the primary objectives of the Economic Development plan element and provides the clear policy guidance to meet the goals and objectives of *Confluence*. This section describes the necessary action items that need to occur to ensure that the City moves forward in meeting its economic development potential. A stepwise approach is provided that lays out the necessary actions to achieve economic development objectives.

Overall Economic Development Strategy

Many of the requirements for business retention, expansion, new starts, and relocation are within the City's control, while some require working closely with other entities to provide. To forge a successful economic development strategy, these other entities and the City must create a partnership to meet the needs of the business community.

The City offers a variety of economic development programs and products, including the preparation of an Economic Profile, Small Business Development Loan Program, and TIF District Loans and Grants. In addition, the City supported the creation of the Coulee Region Business Center, now administers the Wisconsin Department of Commerce Development Zone Program and provides ad hoc business development/recruitment activities. At this point, however, the City needs to create a formal economic development program.

Objective 1: Economic Development Preparedness. The City will begin its formal economic development program with the preparation of an Economic Development Preparedness Plan.

The City, not having a formalized economic development program must first begin with the basics. The most basic and initial step in achieving economic development goals is to prepare an Economic Development Preparedness Plan.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Economic Development Preparedness Plan.** With the creation of a staff position for economic development programs, the City shall undertake the preparation of an Economic Development Preparedness Plan. That plan and process will use models from around the Country including, for example, the Minnesota Star Cities Program. This plan will be completed by mid-2003. The Planning Department shall continue to offer other programs until the plan is complete.
- 2. Leader in Economic Development.** The City shall have a formal economic development program in place that is recognized by both industry and other economic development partners as a leader in economic development programs and solutions. Other economic development partners include: LADCO, Downtown Mainstreet Inc., Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L) Small Business Development Center, utilities, and the State of Wisconsin.

- 3. Balanced Programs and Incentives.** The City shall initiate and support an intergovernmental agreement with all jurisdictions in the La Crosse metropolitan area that precludes using public financial incentives to move jobs from one municipality to another within this region. The City shall sell its quality of life and not chase economic development that results in communities within the region bidding up economic incentives against each other for no net gain to our region.

Objective 2: Brain Drain. Work with the State of Wisconsin to develop specific strategies to address statewide and regional “Brain Drain.”

The City will attempt to solve its “Brain Drain” issues by working with the State of Wisconsin in its initiative to keep young educated persons in the State as they enter the workforce.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Ally with Educational Institutions.** The City shall work much more closely with the three institutions of higher learning to explore mechanisms to retain recent graduates. The City’s economic development programs will take advantage of the ready supply of educated workers and shall capitalize on its quality of life issues that are the driving force in the technology arena.



**Viterbo University and Western Wisconsin Technical College
– two of La Crosse’s institutions of post high school education**

- 2. Active Statewide Involvement.** The City shall become a member of Forward Wisconsin and attend regular statewide level meetings, such as the Governor’s Conference on Economic Development.

Objective 3: Secure City’s Competitive Position within the Region. Use “Smart Growth” strategies to maintain the City’s leadership role in regional economic development.

While the City has been a leader in economic development for over 150 years, the face of the Coulee Region is changing with ample development room in adjacent communities and counties. The City must now work even harder in these ever-changing times to remain a key player in economic development. For example, the creation of a county-wide entity that would engage in real estate acquisition and/or construction projects to facilitate industrial and commercial real estate development by using public and private dollars could make the City work that much harder to stem the tide of business development in the suburban areas.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Competition from other Area Communities/Creation of CRIPCO (Coulee Region Industrial Park Corporation).** The City shall continue to actively participate in the discussions on the creation of a CRIPCO type of organization. The City shall not oppose such an organization; but if it is created, the organization must have a non-compete and non-relocate provision in its by-laws. The City may even be a member of such an organization.
- 2. Capitalizes on City Assets.** The City, through the implementation of the various aspects of this Comprehensive Plan shall make La Crosse “the choice” for business activity in the region.
- 3. Community Development Corporation (CDC).** The City shall continue to assist in the creation of a CDC and will partially fund such an organization and its economic development function. The City can benefit from the creation of a CDC organization that supports and fosters neighborhood level economic development activities.

Redevelopment

Recognizing the obstacles that limit the City’s ability to expand its borders, the City must redevelop sites within the existing City limits. Examples include the Mobil Oil property, underutilized sites associated with plant closings, or sites that are no longer used for their originally intended purpose, such as Trane Plant 6.

Objective 4: Land Availability. Proactively seek out raw land for development of new industrial sites and parks.

There is very little raw land available for new industrial development within the City, even with the creation of the International Business Park. There are some small parcels of property within existing industrial areas that are underutilized.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Land Inventory and Acquisition.** The City will maintain a database of vacant or underutilized properties and prioritize the list for acquisition of these properties. The City will actively search for and purchase underutilized properties or land in the downtown, the “Coulee Sites” Industrial Park, Mid-city Industrial Park, and along the waterfront to create an inventory of sites available for business development. Figure 11-1 illustrates areas that should be studied to determine their revitalization potential.
- 2. Facilitate Redevelopment.** The City and the Redevelopment Authority shall more aggressively facilitate redevelopment of underutilized properties through efforts to make sure sites are ready for new development and/or redevelopment. Such efforts might include property acquisition and consolidation, infrastructure and access improvements.

The City shall facilitate the redevelopment of sites throughout the City; not just sites downtown or in industrial parks. This includes residential areas or areas such as the former Earthgrains area south of Sims Place, or projects like the depot renovation project.



Renovated Amtrak Depot in the Lower North Side Neighborhood

3. **Land Sales.** The City shall sell lands acquired for development purposes outside of industrial parks via a Request for Proposal process.
4. **Balanced Commercial/Industrial/Residential Land Uses.** Through zoning and redevelopment efforts, the City shall provide a supply of land that is suitable for commercial and industrial uses. The City will also provide an ample supply of suitable land that is guided and zoned for residential development.

Objective 5: Redevelopment of Brownfields and Underutilized Sites. Focus economic development activity on redevelopment of existing “brownfield” and underutilized properties.

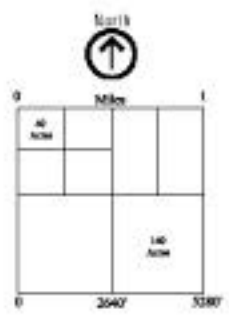
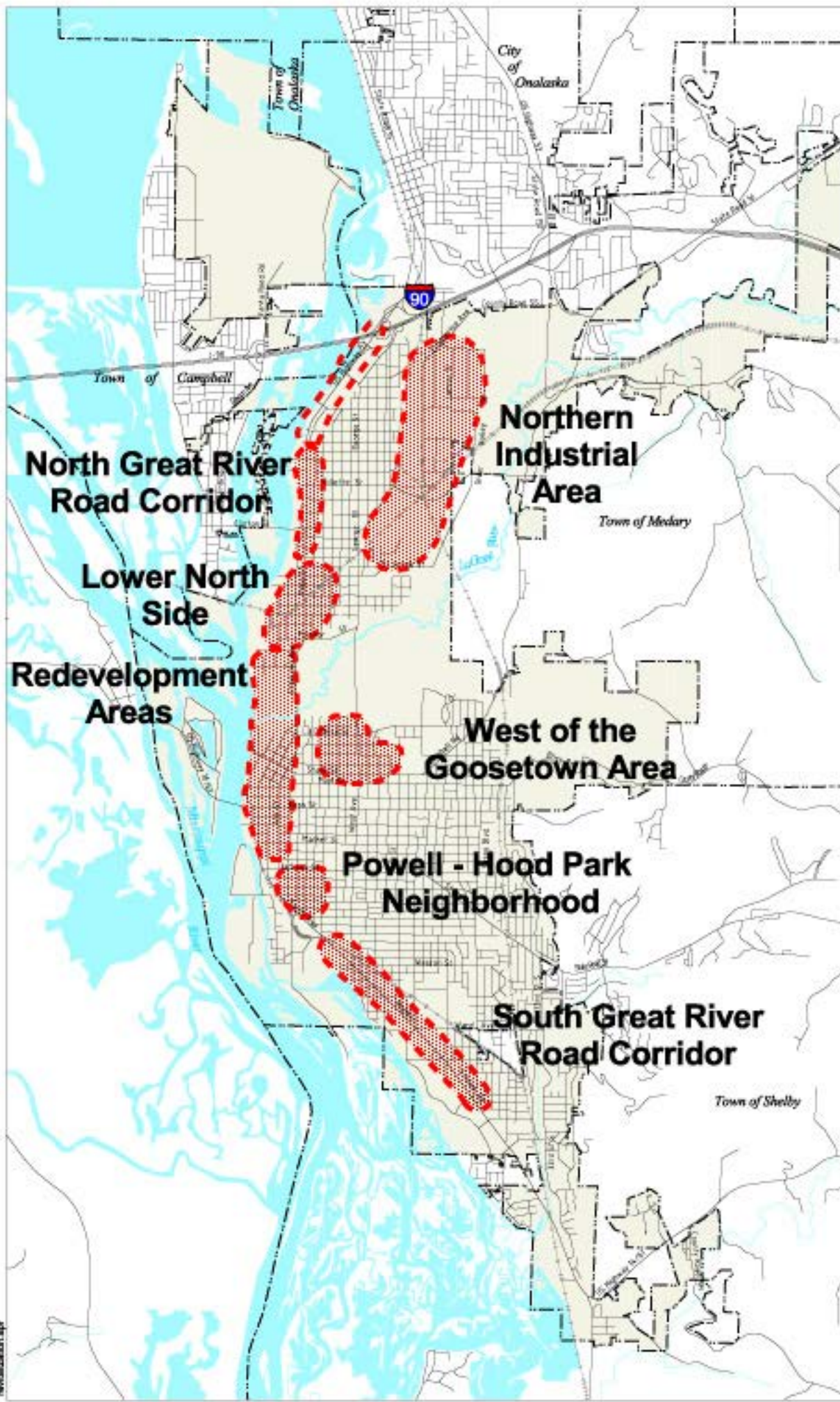
With the scarcity of raw land for expansion of the City’s tax base and business and industry base, the City must position itself to redevelop existing “brownfield” sites and other properties determined to be underutilized.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Brownfield Funding.** The City shall annually review potential projects to determine if any are eligible for Wisconsin Department of Commerce and Department of Natural Resources grant programs. The City shall actively pursue State and Federal grants and technical assistance programs that provided tremendous benefit to the City in the past.
2. **Complete Current Projects.** The City shall give priority to completing redevelopment projects currently underway within the next three years. These include:
 - The area south of the La Crosse River housing the Machine Products property
 - The former Northern Engraving building
 - The vacant two acre Riverplace II site
3. **Prioritize Key Redevelopment Sites.** The City shall prioritize acquisition of sites that must be under City control and ownership to make redevelopment feasible. Potential sites include:
 - The former Montgomery Wards Site
 - The “Old Listman Mill” Site (Shultz Distributing)
 - The former NSP substation
 - A 1/2 block on 3rd Street between Jay and King Streets
 - The former Frank Liquor Site
 - The former G. Heileman Warehouse at 2nd and King Streets
 - Lands under the existing and proposed Cass Street Bridge project
 - The Mobil Oil Site and environs

**Figure 11-1
Potential
Revitalization
Study Areas**

-  Study Implementation Area
-  Potential Revitalization Area
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Street
-  City of La Crosse
-  Water



**City of
La Crosse**
*Comprehensive
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4. **Utilize the Redevelopment Authority.** The City shall utilize any and all funding sources available, so that redevelopment is not stymied by limiting available City funds to General Obligation debt. The State statutes give the Redevelopment Authority vast powers and tools for redevelopment, yet the body remains largely ineffective. The Redevelopment Authority is utilized as a matter of convenience and not used to its full extent. Guaranteed funding through Federal CDBG and bonding authority in the form of TIF Bonds or Revenue Bonds, and the wider use of eminent domain are necessary to enable the Authority to create sites for eventual tax base growth and achieve redevelopment objectives.
5. **Focus on Projects that Provide a Return on Investment.** When developing the five-year Capital Improvement Program, the City shall place a higher priority on redevelopment activities that directly produce tax base, as opposed to projects that are more operational in nature.

Objective 6: Central Business District Incubator. Promote the historic Central Business District as an incubator for white-collar job growth in the City.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Continue Downtown Redevelopment Successes.** Historic Downtown La Crosse shall be the City's primary redevelopment focus, with a strong emphasis on historic preservation. The City shall continue to implement the City Vision 2000 Master Plan long after the TIF District #6 spending period ends. The City shall capitalize on the Great American Main Street Award in all its promotional activities, and work even closer with Downtown Mainstreet, Incorporated.



Pearl Street Renovation

2. **Downtown as Western Wisconsin’s Regional Hub.** Downtown shall continue to function as the regional center for office, government, and entertainment. Emphasis should be on vertically mixed development, creating an attractive pedestrian environment, increased housing, day and night activities, river access and intensified land uses. Downtown shall be defined as the area west of 8th Street, south of the La Crosse River, north of Cameron Avenue to the Mississippi River.

3. **Enhance Waterfront Amenities.** The City shall continue to enhance downtown and the waterfront through the extension of parkland along the river to the north and south. Riverfront land use will focus on parks, housing, offices, and river-dependent industries. Respecting the value of the three rivers, wetland-marsh areas and bluffs will be the driving economic force that keeps La Crosse at a competitive advantage in the upper Mississippi River Valley.

4. **Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program.** The City shall continue to support neighborhood-based economic development efforts by organizations such as like the Caledonia Street Merchants, and shall expand its outreach efforts and technical assistance to other such organized groups. An opportunity exists to create a commercial revitalization program using the four-point Main Street approach aimed at neighborhood-oriented commercial areas throughout the City, such as along George Street.



Caledonia Street Commercial Node

Living Wage Employment

La Crosse has long been known for its low wages relative to other metropolitan areas in the State. Recent surveys confirm that residents are concerned about low wages and the lack of health benefits provided by low wage jobs.

Objective 7: Living Wage Employment. Work to improve job wages and benefits for residents through City public works contracts and by working with employers and employee groups.

Policies/Actions:

1. **Promote Technical Assistance Programs.** The City shall collaborate with Western Wisconsin Technical College (WWTC), LADCO, and the UW-L Small Business Assistance center to promote available training and business programs that will either assist in helping entrepreneurs in starting their own businesses or that will assist workers in getting a better job.
2. **Education and Training.** The City shall make publicity of existing programs and the development of new programs a higher economic and social priority. These programs are aimed at improving educational and training options available for those receiving governmental assistance, and currently earning lower wages.
3. **Promote Journey-to-Work Mode Choices.** The City shall promote the Municipal Transit Utility and its many varied programs providing basic transportation services that assist workers in meeting their transportation needs.
4. **Child Care Needs.** The City shall work with Family Resources, WWTC and employers to provide necessary childcare services to reduce hindrances to employment opportunities.
5. **Increase Average Wage.** The City shall actively recruit industries that offer higher wage employment options. The City shall continue its efforts to become a center for new technology industries, and capitalize on the presence of three colleges, and two research hospitals to attract new businesses to the City and the region.



Objective 8: Foster Technology Sector. Foster growth of technology industries in La Crosse and support efforts to continually improve technological skills in the labor force.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. State Technology Zone Designation.** The City was actively involved in the preparation of the Wisconsin Department of Commerce Technology Zone application. If the City/region does not receive the designation, the City and region shall work together to readdress the situation in a positive, progressive and even an aggressive way. While it would be important to have this designation, it would be more important to make the name “La Crosse” synonymous with technology and innovation throughout the Country.
- 2. Technology Business Alliance.** The City shall continue to be an active member of the recently created Technology Business Alliance as its primary method of ensuring that technology companies and workers improve their technological skills.



Trane Company, headquartered in La Crosse, is a major employer in the area

Objective 9: Promote Manufacturing Sector. Provide a balanced approach to economic development that encourages manufacturers to grow and do business in La Crosse.

The City currently has a diversified economy that has buffered it from the nationwide decline in major manufacturing. However, this decline in manufacturing has resulted in the loss of living-wage jobs with good benefits. The City must not give up on manufacturing and must continue to explore opportunities to expand existing manufacturing business and attract new businesses to La Crosse. Existing industrial parks are shown on Figure 11-2.

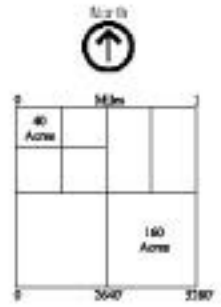
Policies/Actions:

- 1. Long-Range Economic Forecasting.** The City shall develop methods to extract City data from Metropolitan Statistical Area and County-level data for its own use in long-range economic forecasting. The City must stay ahead of emerging trends and be able to forecast some events so that the City is better able to respond to major employment shifts. The City, through careful planning and analysis, must play to its strengths and fully utilize its assets while protecting the City from the negative aspects of growth.
- 2. Utilize Data.** With the dearth of City level data, the City shall take advantage of the upcoming U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census annual community census data and utilize it for economic development planning.

Figure 11-2
Existing
Industrial
Parks



- Municipal Boundary
 - City of La Crosse
 - Water
 - Railroad
 - Road
 - Industrial Parks
- Land Use Designation**
- Light Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Business Park



City of
La Crosse
Comprehensive
Plan

Implementation Program

This section describes the major Policies/Actions involved in implementing the Economic Development plan element. Table 11-1 is intended to guide City staff and the Common Council in setting priorities for capital budgeting and staff allocation. It is expected that this table will be reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, to establish new priorities.

Priority ranking is defined as follows:

- 1 = highest or short-term priority
- 2 = secondary or mid-term priority
- 3 = lowest priority or represents on-going activities

Table 11-1: Implementation Actions for Economic Development

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	Economic Development Preparedness Plan. Prepare an Economic Development Preparedness Plan using models from around the country. This plan will be completed in mid-2003.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority
1	Community Development Corporation. Create and partially fund a CDC organization to foster neighborhood level economic development activities.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority
1	Complete Current Projects. Give priority to completing redevelopment projects currently underway within the next three years.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority Plan Commission Other City Depts.
1	Facilitate Redevelopment. Aggressively facilitate redevelopment of underutilized properties through efforts to make sites ready for redevelopment to occur.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority Other City Depts.
2	Utilize Redevelopment Authority. Better utilize the Redevelopment Authority powers and tools to achieve redevelopment objectives.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority
2	Land Inventory and Priorities. Maintain a database of vacant or underutilized properties and prioritize the list for acquisition and redevelopment.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority Plan Commission
2	Technology Zone Designation. Work with others in the region to promote State Technology Zone Designation, or, if not designated, readdress the situation in a positive, progressive and even aggressive manner.	Planning Department Common Council Other municipalities and economic development organizations in the Coulee Region.

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
2	Promote Technical Assistance Programs and Education. Work with area educational institutions and others to promote available training and business programs.	Common Council Western Wisconsin Technical College La Crosse Area Development Corporation University of Wisconsin- La Crosse
2	Downtown and Riverfront Redevelopment. Continue to focus redevelopment efforts in the historic downtown and along the riverfront.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority Plan Commission
3	Brownfield Funding. Annually review potential projects and actively pursue State and Federal grants and technical assistance programs to foster brownfield redevelopment.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority
3	Active Organization Involvement. Continue to actively participate in programs with organizations and institutions involved in economic development efforts, including: Technology Business Alliance, Governor’s Conference on Economic Development, LADCO, WWTC and UW-L.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority
3	Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program. Continue to support efforts by groups such as the Caledonia Street Merchants to foster neighborhood commercial revitalization. This would include increased outreach efforts and providing technical assistance.	Common Council Planning Department Plan Commission Various neighborhood and merchant organizations.
3	Long-Range Economic Forecasting. Develop methods to collect and maintain current City and County-wide data for use in long-range economic forecasting.	Planning Department La Crosse County
3	Creation of Coulee Region Industrial Park Corporation (CRIPCO). Continue to actively participate in discussion regarding creation of a CRIPCO type organization in the Coulee Region.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority

Confluence:

The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

12.0 Heritage Preservation Plan Element

URS

Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE PRESERVATION ISSUES	1
LOSS OF SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC BUILDINGS	1
LACK OF UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FOR LOCAL DESIGNATION PROCESS	2
ROLE OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION	2
GUIDANCE FROM THE CONCEPT PLAN	4
OVERVIEW OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION PLAN.....	5
SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES	6
HERITAGE PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	7
POLICY AND PLANNING.....	7
ADMINISTRATION	14
EDUCATION/PUBLIC RELATIONS	22
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM	26

List of Figures

FIGURE 12-1 DRAFT REVIEW PROCESS FOR URBAN DESIGN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	19
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List of Tables

Table 12-1: Implementation Actions for Heritage Preservation	26
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Appendices

- Appendix A Locally Designated Properties
- Appendix B National Register Properties

Heritage Preservation Plan

The Heritage Preservation Plan for La Crosse establishes the policy framework to preserve and enhance the cultural resources “that make La Crosse, La Crosse.” Located in a spectacular natural valley surrounded by bluffs at the confluence of the La Crosse, the Black and the Mississippi rivers, the site of La Crosse was known to Native Americans long before Euro-Americans established fur trading posts. La Crosse became a steamboat port, a railroad center and the second largest city in Wisconsin by the 1880s, with an economy built on transportation and trade. Over the past century, La Crosse has grown into a medical, financial, educational and service center for southwestern Wisconsin.

La Crosse retains a strong sense of its history, despite the loss of many significant buildings over the years. La Crosse’s historic buildings and sites are important landmarks in creating community and neighborhood identity. The Downtown Commercial Historic District contains some of the City’s oldest architectural resources and their restoration has helped to generate a revitalized downtown with new construction that compliments the historic character. The historic downtown was a major contributing factor in earning La Crosse the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Great American Main Street Award in 2002. Preservation of historic buildings and sites has made economic sense and is a critical element in the revitalization of both commercial areas and residential neighborhoods. La Crosse’s downtown and its historic neighborhoods have created a tourist destination that reinforces economic development efforts.

The Heritage Preservation Plan is intended to guide public and private investments to preserve La Crosse’s cultural resources and guide the work of the La Crosse Historic Preservation Commission.

Summary of Heritage Preservation Issues

The *Issues and Conditions Report* identified issues that have hampered the effectiveness of heritage preservation planning in La Crosse. These include:

Loss of Significant Historic Buildings

La Crosse has suffered some striking losses of important historic buildings such as the Post Office, the Public Library, the old Courthouse and the Stoddard Hotel. The HPC has questioned how it can more effectively explain the benefits of preservation, as well as work proactively to prevent demolitions of significant buildings.

- Would a preservation plan offer the information and guidance both to educate and establish roles, responsibilities and priorities for the Historic Preservation Commission?
- How can the HPC begin to work with the Common Council, neighborhood groups and others to develop a better understanding of the benefits of heritage preservation?

Lack of Understanding and Support for Local Designation Process

The HPC has had many designations of historic buildings overturned by the Common Council in recent years. The designation process and its benefits to the community do not appear to be widely understood.

- To what extent is revision to the designation and Certificate of Recommendation process needed?
- Would more concrete standards of significance for historic properties make the designation process more understandable and provide better support for nominations?
- To what extent could the Overlay Zoning District mechanism better protect historic resources and guide redevelopment activities?

Role of the Historic Preservation Commission

The HPC lacks critical powers to enforce Certificates of Recommendation and has not used the overlay district mechanism. Further, the lack of dedicated staff and location of the HPC outside the Planning Department has hampered the use of the HPC as an implementation mechanism for City development policies and objectives.

- To what extent could the Historic Preservation Commission be integrated into the neighborhood planning process?
- Could design review guidelines enable the HPC to better serve the public and the City of La Crosse in dealing with neighborhood planning?
- To what extent could the HPC participate in developing an historic preservation component in neighborhood plans and in guiding design of infill development?
- Is there support for moving the HPC administrative responsibilities to the Planning Department, while maintaining the legal advice and assistance of the City Attorney's Office?
- Is there support to dedicate staff to work with the HPC and better integrate them into other planning activities?



Old County Courthouse, Fourth and Vine Streets



Fourth and Vine Streets (2002)



Stoddard Hotel, Fourth and State Streets



Fourth and State Streets (2002)



Old Public Library, 800 Main Street



Public Library, 800 Main Street (2002)



Old Post Office, Fourth and State Streets



Post Office, Fourth and State Streets (2002)

Guidance from the Concept Plan

The Concept Plan for *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan* emphasizes neighborhood revitalization. Heritage Preservation is an important component of neighborhood revitalization, and the HPC can be a significant force in neighborhood planning. The concept plan identified three specific actions that the Heritage Preservation Plan will incorporate:

- **Historic Districts and Structures:** The City shall proactively designate historic districts and structures, and incorporate the principles of historic rehabilitation into redevelopment.
- **Historic Preservation Commission:** The City shall support a more active role for the Historic Preservation Commission in review of redevelopment and infill projects.
- **Rural Character:** The City shall support the efforts of La Crosse County and the Towns to preserve significant farm structures and consider incorporation of such structures in new subdivisions.

In keeping with the HPC's more active role in redevelopment and infill projects, the Commission may assist in implementation of other comprehensive plan elements including the following:

Land Use: The Land Use Plan identifies Downtown La Crosse as a revitalization priority, with a strong emphasis on historic preservation. The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) designation of the Downtown Commercial Historic District involves the HPC in downtown planning and redevelopment activities, even though NRHP designation does not mandate review of building changes and alterations as local designation would.

Urban Design: The Urban Design Plan emphasizes improving the appearance of buildings and streetscapes through enforcement of design standards. Although the HPC is charged with reviewing changes in local historic districts, the design review concepts are much the same in reviewing changes to traditional neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods and Housing: The Neighborhoods and Housing Plan emphasize infill and rehabilitation of existing units, with design controls established to guide such development. Infill development and rehabilitation of existing units can have major impacts on existing traditional neighborhoods and could benefit from HPC review.

Economic Development: The Economic Development plan notes that redevelopment of urbanized areas and protection of quality of life features will enhance La Crosse's competitive position in attracting investment. Protection of historic resources is an excellent technique to capitalize on the City's distinctiveness for cultural tourism.



Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul Railway Depot, 1926-27, NRHP; Locally Designated

Overview of the Heritage Preservation Plan

The Heritage Preservation Plan deals with ideas that can be interpreted subjectively. Heritage Preservation guidelines are not identified by specifics like zoning requirements or transportation levels—but by characteristics such as location, setting, feeling, relationship to the City’s history, or architectural style. Heritage Preservation deals with these difficult-to-quantify tangible, and sometimes intangible, characteristics that help define La Crosse and our understanding of it.

While establishing policies for the preservation of La Crosse’s cultural resources, the Heritage Preservation Plan also provides direction for the La Crosse Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). One of the few Comprehensive Plan elements with its own implementation body, this plan will guide the work of the HPC.

Based on the *Issues and Conditions Report* and discussion with the Historic Preservation Commission, the following overarching goals are established for the Heritage Preservation Plan:

Goals:

1. **Identification and Protection:** To provide a visible public statement of the Historic Preservation Commission’s responsibility to identify and protect buildings, districts, sites and structures with historic, architectural, archaeological or cultural significance.
2. **Planning Integration:** To develop objectives, actions and priorities for Heritage Preservation planning so that the HPC may better support and integrate with Planning Department programs.



1200 Block Caledonia Street Commercial Area

Summary of Objectives

Objectives for the Heritage Preservation Plan are summarized below:

Objective 1: Designation Activities. Continue to evaluate historic, architectural and archaeological resources for designation and protection.

Objective 2: Establish Priorities. Establish a system of designation priorities and a coordinated preservation program.

Objective 3: Broaden HPC Scope. Broaden HPC activities to enable the Commission to participate in planning implementation.

Objective 4: Develop Institutional Framework. Develop a stronger institutional framework for HPC actions and implementation within City Hall.

Objective 5: Improve Tools. Improve the tools available for the HPC to use in protecting significant resources.

Objective 6: Increase Understanding of Heritage Preservation. Work with City officials and the public to develop a better understanding of heritage preservation issues and importance.

Objective 7: Build Support. Build broad-based community support for heritage preservation, the HPC, and its responsibilities.

Objective 8: Informative Materials. Provide information about the heritage preservation process and its effects in La Crosse.



McMillan Building, 1885, La Crosse Commercial Historic District, NRHP; Locally Designated

Heritage Preservation Objectives and Actions

This section describes objectives and specific actions the City can take to achieve the preservation goals listed above.

Policy and Planning

Objective 1: Designation Activities. Continue to evaluate historic, architectural and archaeological resources for designation and protection.

It is the statutory responsibility of the La Crosse HPC to recognize and oversee the preservation of the City’s cultural resources including buildings, sites, objects, structures and historic districts. The HPC is charged with identifying appropriate architectural and historical properties and archaeological sites and carrying out the designation process (see Appendix A and B for maps and lists of locally designated and NRHP properties).

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Designation Strategies.** The HPC shall continue to study and proactively designate local historic, architectural, and archaeological resources. There are numerous significant properties in the City of La Crosse. As early as the 1970s, over 200 properties were identified as significant. The 1984 *City of La Crosse, Wisconsin*,

Architectural and Historical Intensive Survey Report (completed by Architectural Researches, Inc.) identified over 2600 properties; the 1996 addendum surveyed another 525 properties. Historic districts were recommended, and some of those have been named to the NRHP. The HPC has locally designated over 50 individual properties, but no historic districts. Nearly 100 archaeological sites are known and several listed on the NRHP, but not locally designated.

Strategies: The following strategies suggest methods the HPC can use in determining how to evaluate resources for designation:

- **Local designation of National Register districts and properties:** In early 2002, only seven of the 23 individually nominated National Register of Historic Places properties in La Crosse were also locally designated. The three NRHP historic districts—La Crosse Commercial Historic District, Cass and King Residential Historic District, and 10th and Cass Neighborhood Historic District—were not locally designated. NRHP designation recognizes the significance of buildings and districts, but does not include design review of alterations, as local historic district designation would require. National Register properties only receive reviews if Federal funds or permits were being used, or the applicant wanted to qualify for tax credits for income-producing buildings. The HPC shall consider local designation of NRHP districts and properties.
- **Designation of Individual Properties:** This has been the primary means of HPC designation and has resulted in recognition of over 50 individual properties. The HPC shall consider annual goals for local designation in order to develop an ongoing designation program.
- **Designation of local historic districts:** The HPC shall study additional areas outside of NRHP districts that may be worthy of local historic district designation.
- **Multiple property designation (stylistic-thematic):** The HPC may choose to identify a particular style or type of building and nominate all buildings with those qualifications. For example, this approach could be used for all brewery-related buildings, all buildings by a particular architectural firm, or any other thematic type of nomination.
- **Timeline approach:** The HPC could identify the oldest buildings in the City and systematically nominate them for designation. Similarly, efforts could be made to focus on buildings of a specified time period.



Charles Solberg Building, 1870, Downtown Commercial Historic District, NRHP



Fred G. Cutler House, 1902, Cass and King Residential Historic District, NRHP



La Crosse Public Library, North Branch, 1941-42, Locally Designated



Henry Salzer House, 1912-13, Cass and King Residential Historic District, NRHP

Objective 2: Establish Priorities. Establish a system of designation priorities and a coordinated preservation program.

While the HPC is charged with identifying priorities for designation, the Commission's activities will be more effective if carried out in conjunction with City programs for urban design, neighborhood planning, and housing rehabilitation. The HPC shall identify its planning and programming directions to foster better understanding and support of its actions in La Crosse.

The La Crosse Historic Preservation ordinance spells out criteria on which local buildings, sites, objects and districts may be recommended for designation, and shall be considered by the HPC in determining designation priorities. All nominations suggested by the HPC or by the community shall identify the appropriate criteria from the list.

Historic Structures and Sites Designation Criteria

[La Crosse Municipal Code, Section 2.27 (E) (1)]

For purposes of this ordinance, a historic structure or historic site designation may be placed on any site, natural or improved, including any building, improvement or structure located thereon, or any area of particular historic, architectural or cultural significance to the City of La Crosse, such as historic structures or sites which:

- (a) Exemplify or reflect the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state or community; or*
- (b) Are identified with historic personages or with important events in national, state or local history; or*
- (c) Embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style, method of construction, or of indigenous materials or craftsmanship; or*
- (d) Are representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.*



Mons Anderson House, 1855, 1878, NRHP, Locally Designated



**First Methodist Church (Wesley United), 1885-86,
Locally Designated**

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Set Designation Priorities.** The HPC shall set priorities for designations that will best help to build a heritage preservation program. The HPC shall use the following considerations for establishing designation priorities and determining when to study specific areas or individual designations:
 - **Significance:** The architectural, historical or cultural significance of a property or district is the primary consideration in identifying resources for designation. The survey work carried out in La Crosse has identified almost 3,000 buildings with significance. Numerous potentially significant archaeological sites and unmarked Native American burials are known to be located in the La Crosse area.
 - **Under-representation of vernacular resources:** Because of the difficulty of identifying significance, vernacular resources, such as neighborhood commercial buildings or modest worker’s houses, are often overlooked in surveys. La Crosse has excellent examples of these types of buildings that shall be studied and appropriate examples recommended for designation.
 - **Degree of threat:** The HPC shall realistically consider threats to historic buildings and archaeological sites and whether designation is feasible and/or desirable. Threats can include business and institutional expansion, roadway widening or other transportation improvements, major redevelopment efforts, or potential zoning changes that could affect use of a building or site. The HPC shall anticipate threats where possible to identify significant properties early in a planning process when there are still opportunities to consider alternatives.
 - **Coordination with other City programs (see Objective 3):** Heritage preservation designation is a tool that can be instrumental in preserving neighborhoods. The HPC shall consider whether designation may enhance the City’s housing rehabilitation programs; neighborhood planning activities; commercial revitalization efforts; and street, sewer, or other major capital improvement projects.
 - **Citizen interest and participation:** Designations shall also reflect the interest of citizens in preserving their neighborhoods. The HPC shall identify interested neighborhoods and work with them to raise awareness and pursue designations. Success in one neighborhood will help to raise awareness of the value of local preservation tools.
- 2. Current Priorities.** The HPC shall annually discuss preservation priorities for the year. Using the strategies and methods described above, the Commission shall make an effort to program its work in conjunction with other Planning Department and City initiatives. Priorities suggested by the HPC and City staff in development of this plan included the following:

- Designate the two NRHP residential historic districts (Cass and King Residential District, and 10th and Cass Neighborhood District) as local historic districts, and develop Preservation Plans, including Design Guidelines, for the districts.
- Identify other areas for further designation study, beginning with areas that have completed neighborhood plans: Powell-Hood Park-Hamilton Neighborhood; the Lower North Side Neighborhood; the Goosetown-Campus Neighborhood; and the Washburn Neighborhood. Additional areas for study shall be developed as other neighborhood plans or redevelopment activities proceed.

Objective 3: Broaden HPC Scope. Broaden HPC activities to enable the Commission to participate in planning implementation.

The HPC functions under Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 62, which mandates that any city with buildings and/or historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places shall have an Historic Preservation Commission to regulate and preserve historic buildings, archaeological sites and the character of historic districts. As a municipally-appointed board, the HPC offers significant expertise through its members' knowledge of architecture, history and urban design. This plan suggests that the HPC become a stronger participant in La Crosse planning implementation by focusing its designation activities to reinforce the actions identified both in the Heritage Preservation chapter and other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. Their knowledge and experience can provide important contributions to neighborhood revitalization and housing programs in the Planning Department.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. HPC and Planning Efforts.** The City shall include an HPC representative on neighborhood planning task forces to ensure that heritage preservation issues are addressed in neighborhood plans. The preservation of historic buildings and sites is one of the most significant tools that has helped establish a unique character and sense of place enhancing La Crosse's identity as a Mississippi River city. HPC involvement in planning activities could ensure that information about historic buildings and sites and identification of potential designations are considered in conjunction with neighborhood plans.

The City has completed plans for the Powell-Hood Park-Hamilton Neighborhood (1998); the Lower North Side Neighborhood (1999); the Goosetown-Campus Neighborhood (2001); and the Washburn Neighborhood (2002). Each plan recognized historic resources and included goals and actions for preservation of buildings. Neighborhoods may choose to include renovation of historic buildings as a focal point, and ask HPC members or staff to assist in developing infill development guidelines so that new construction is compatible with existing buildings.



St. James Catholic Church, 1900-01



Horner Building, 1894

Administration

Objective 4: Develop Institutional Framework. Develop a stronger institutional framework for HPC actions and implementation within City Hall.

Because of its institutional location within the City Attorney's Office, the HPC has been separated from the Planning Department, which handles many functions related to HPC activities. This separation has made it more difficult for the HPC to participate effectively in the planning process. In addition, the Attorney's Office cannot provide staff that is needed for the HPC to carry out its work in a programmatic fashion.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Relocate HPC to Planning.** The HPC shall be moved from the City Attorney's Office and placed under the administration of the Planning Department in order to participate more effectively in developing City policy and as a regulatory body. The HPC regulates historic character in conjunction with various neighborhood and housing activities already administered by the Planning Department. Many HPC projects, including the *City of La Crosse Architectural and Historical Intensive Survey Report* updated in 1996, have been funded by the Planning Department. Administration by Planning Department staff will provide a more efficient way of integrating heritage preservation activities into ongoing Planning policies and programs.

It should be noted that Planning Department administration does not remove the City Attorney's advisory role to the HPC. Planning Department staff will work closely with the City Attorney to review applications and to have the City Attorney present at HPC public hearings in an advisory capacity as needed.

- 2. Planning Staff Administration.** The HPC has been hampered by a lack of staff to both administer and to use the HPC effectively as an implementation tool. As volunteers, Commissioners have struggled to manage designations, education and outreach, and develop heritage preservation policies. Although the HPC has accomplished much, Commissioners are often in a position of reacting to proposals. They have not participated in historic neighborhood or downtown planning, where historic resources may be affected.

Planning Department staffing would directly link the HPC with planning tasks and could include the Commission when appropriate. Staff assistance would enable the HPC to better program its activities and enhance their ability to communicate with City officials and the public. HPC staff would likely hold other Planning Department responsibilities such as urban design and site plan review activities, in which similar training and experience would be necessary.

- 3. HPC Program Funding.** Funding is necessary for the HPC to complete survey and designation work, conduct preservation planning, prepare educational materials and participate in continuing education. The HPC shall work with the Planning Department and the Common Council to identify City monies that could be requested to carry out programs and specific projects. The HPC shall also pursue specialized funding, such as the State of Wisconsin's Historic Preservation Fund Subgrants, for preservation planning. Staff support is necessary to investigate and prepare funding applications and project management.
- 4. Change HPC Name.** Change the HPC name from the Historic Preservation Commission to the Heritage Preservation Commission. The HPC has expanded its role in keeping with the City's focus on urban design controls, preservation of the natural as well as built environment, and supporting and enhancing traditional urban neighborhoods—all of which are identified as directions in the City Comprehensive Plan. The name change is suggested to better reflect the Commission's responsibilities in designation, education and protection of the City's heritage.



Joseph Hixon House, 1901-02, Cass and King Residential Historic District,
NRHP; Locally Designated

Objective 5: Improve Tools. Improve the tools available for the HPC to use in protecting significant resources.

The HPC has responsibility for implementing its own ordinance and other ordinances added in recent years to regulate specific uses. Currently there are no design guidelines to assist the HPC in making consistent and informed decisions in design review. The HPC ordinance also limits the Commission’s power to enforce Certificates of Recommendation.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Rework Existing Ordinances.** The City shall revise existing ordinances pertaining to historic preservation in order to improve implementation of preservation objectives. Following are suggested ordinance revisions:

- a. Require Common Council designation** of buildings, districts and sites. Currently, the HPC designates individual buildings, while districts require approval by the Plan Commission and the Common Council. The ordinance shall be strengthened to require approval of individual designations by the Plan Commission and the Common Council, as is currently required for historic districts. Individual designations can be extremely significant and have major effects on nearby property; they also deserve consideration for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan by the Plan Commission and the Common Council. Bringing the Plan Commission and Common Council into the designation process provides ongoing recognition of the importance of heritage preservation to residents and the City as a whole.

Ordinance changes shall be written to include existing designated properties, or to “grandfather” them in under a new ordinance. Since the criteria under which they were designated would not change, it will not be necessary to re-designate properties as occurred under previous ordinance changes.

- b. Clarify procedures** for historic designation and building permit review. Figure 12-1 outlines a draft procedure for (1) designation of properties and (2) building permit review of changes to historic properties and/or properties receiving urban design review. This procedure is an example illustrating methods the City of La Crosse could use to handle various levels of design review.

A property nominated for designation would follow these steps (Figure 12-1 red line):

1. Application for designation reviewed by the HPC staff to ensure completeness.
2. Property is presented for designation at the HPC public hearing.
3. If approved, the property recommended for designation by the HPC is sent to the Plan Commission to ensure that the designation is in conformance with the City's Comprehensive Plan.
4. Plan Commission makes recommendation on comprehensive plan conformance and the recommended property is sent to the Common Council for actual designation.

The HPC's role in this process is to recommend designation, with the Common Council conferring the actual designation of the property as a landmark. The Plan Commission's review is limited to conformance with the comprehensive plan only, not the historic or architectural significance of the building.

A building permit for alteration to a designated property requiring a Certificate of Recommendation would be identified at the application level and would follow these steps (Figure 12-1 green line):

1. Initial building permit review conducted by HPC Staff.
2. Minor work could receive a Certificate of Recommendation, at Staff discretion.
3. Proposed Major work on a building within a district would require HPC review at public hearing; HPC may grant or deny the Certificate of Recommendation.
4. If denied, the applicant may appeal the HPC decision to the Common Council.

- c. Require Certificates of Recommendation to be binding.** The City created the HPC to guard the architectural and historic significance of particular buildings deemed worthy of protection. Changes can endanger the characteristics that make buildings significant. The ordinance shall make the HPC's design review binding for buildings that are designated or located in historic districts. If buildings possess the characteristics that make them eligible for designation, these characteristics require stronger protection than an advisory review.
- d. Plan for cultural resource protection of annexed areas.** Areas with significant archaeological potential in surrounding townships shall be identified, mapped and placed on file at City Hall to ensure that future development in annexed areas does not destroy important resources. The HPC shall also examine surveys of

surrounding townships to ensure that significant buildings are considered for designation upon annexation.

- 2. Combine HPC Ordinances.** The City shall consider including the Historic Zoning Overlay District with Section 2.27 of the Municipal Code, to become part of the Heritage Preservation Ordinance. The City shall also consider how best to administer the HPC with this variety of ordinances in order to prevent confusion, as well as provide guidance to the Commission in carrying out their responsibilities.

The HPC is currently responsible for the HPC ordinance (La Crosse Municipal Code Section 2.27) and the Historic Zoning Overlay District (Section 15.38). The HPC also is involved in reviews of Private Garages in the Community Business District (Section 15.26 T) and reviews of Accessory Buildings (such as Carriage Houses) within historic districts (Section 15.25 A). The HPC has minimal involvement in administering the Regulation of Historic Shipwrecks, and Offenses Involving Disturbance of Archaeological Sites (Section 7.07), although they are related to HPC concerns.

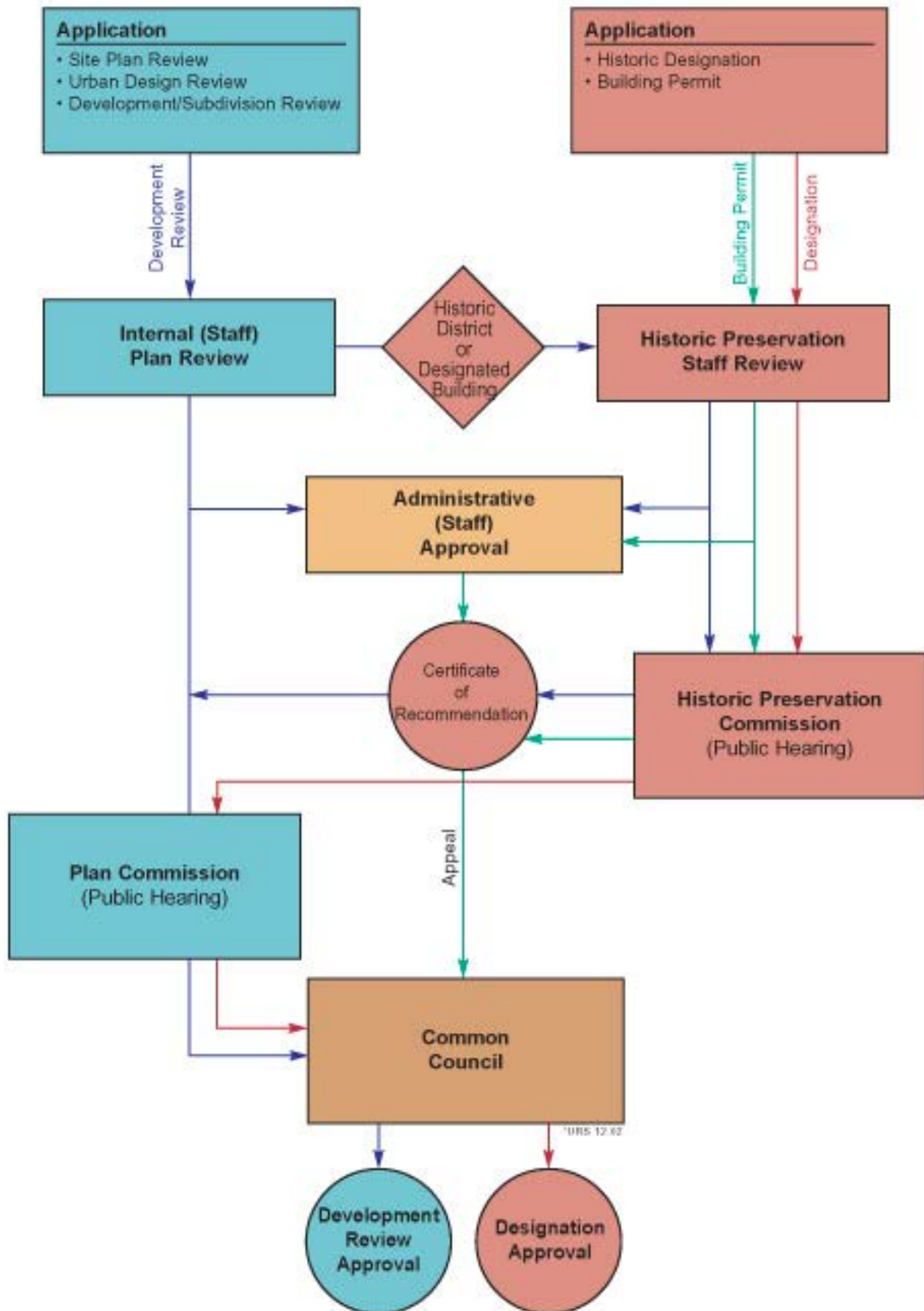
Most important to ongoing HPC activities are the HPC ordinance and the Historic Zoning Overlay District. The Overlay District section currently relies on building inspection staff for enforcement. This may be appropriate for enforcement although the HPC and Planning Department may wish to consider whether this arrangement is most efficient for interpreting preservation plans established by the HPC for designated buildings.



Joseph Jerka Cottage, 1899

Figure: 12-1 Draft Review Process for Urban Design & Historic Preservation

City of La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



- 3. Improve Nomination Form.** The HPC shall improve the nomination form to clarify significance of a property and to provide Preservation Plans for future guidance. Nomination forms for designation of significant properties are the legal documents that underlie HPC recommendations. It is important to recognize that buildings, districts and sites are nominated for specific aspects of significance, not just because they are “nice old buildings” or an opinion of what is historic. The HPC criteria for designation are spelled out both within the HPC ordinance and on the HPC nomination form.

The nomination form for designation shall be expanded to provide greater discussion of the significance of buildings, districts and sites. At a minimum, buildings should be related to the historic contexts developed for the HPC. A discussion will clearly identify the characteristics that make a building significant, whether an example of a particular architectural style, the work of a specific architect or engineer, associated with an important person, or representing the broad history of a community. The discussion of significance is important in justifying designations should there ever be legal questions about the City’s designation process. It also provides clear information for understanding why properties have been recommended for designation.

With staff assistance, nominations shall also include a preservation program for each individually-nominated property. For a building, the preservation program simply identifies the most important characteristics, such as noting that masonry should not be sandblasted or specific exterior detailing that should be retained. The preservation program is intended to help the HPC and staff in identifying what is significant upon designation, and providing guidance in the future in reviewing changes.

- 4. Provide Design Guidelines.** HPC responsibilities include review of new construction and alterations of individually-designated buildings and within locally-designated historic districts. The HPC has been operating without any specific guidelines, other than the abridged Secretary of Interior’s Standards in the ordinance, and some brief guidelines in the zoning overlay district ordinance.

The HPC shall adopt the more detailed Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation as a framework to guide design review and make them available for review by applicants.

The HPC shall also adopt the La Crosse Commercial Historic District Urban Design Overlay as spelled out in Appendix A of the *La Crosse Commercial Historic District Historic Preservation Plan* (Vandewalle & Associates, 1996). These guidelines provide excellent direction that can be applied in other historic districts. Specific design guidelines reflecting each district shall be adopted in conjunction with local district designation.

- 5. Training for HPC Commissioners.** The Planning Department shall develop an orientation session to familiarize new commissioners with the legislative powers and responsibilities of the HPC and to ensure that all commissioners are familiar with past

survey and designation work. Resource notebooks for commissioners, containing pertinent legislation and preservation planning information, have been developed and may be expanded as new information is available. In addition, the City shall encourage staff and commissioners to attend the annual Wisconsin Historic Preservation conference to develop greater understanding of preservation and associated funding and planning resources in the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).



N. B./Jessie Holway House, 1891-92, Cass and King Residential Historic District, NRHP; Locally Designated

Education/Public Relations

La Crosse's historic resources are important factors in attracting attention to downtown and historic neighborhoods; the character of these resources shall be considered in redevelopment and marketing efforts. The City shall utilize a variety of educational opportunities to increase awareness of heritage preservation and its importance in maintaining La Crosse's significant resources, as well as recognize the contributions of those resources to the City's economic development efforts.

Objective 6: Increase Understanding of Heritage Preservation. Work with City officials and the public to develop a better understanding of heritage preservation issues and their importance.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Work with Common Council.** The HPC shall work to develop a better relationship with the Common Council to improve understanding of heritage preservation issues. In conjunction with proposed ordinance changes, preservation priorities, and increased educational materials, the HPC shall begin an ongoing dialogue with the Council. City officials, such as the Planning Director, shall also participate. An informal quarterly briefing would provide the opportunity to not only inform the Council about positive results such as owner-supported designations, but also to inform them of potential problems. A regularly scheduled meeting provides a better opportunity to focus on issues than is often possible in public hearings.
- 2. Standard Briefing Packet.** Develop a briefing packet of typical preservation issues and responses to aid HPC members in discussing issues and to ensure that all members are conveying a consistent message. It is important that HPC members take the lead in advocating the benefits of preservation with the Common Council, to other departments in City Hall, and in the community. When there has been much adversity, it sometimes becomes difficult to articulate the important issues in public meetings. A briefing packet would help all HPC members participate in this process and provide appropriate information.

Objective 7: Build Support. Build broad-based community support for heritage preservation, the HPC, and its responsibilities.**Policies/Actions:**

- 1. Build Working Relationships.** Build working relationships with the Preservation Alliance of La Crosse (PAL), the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center (MVAC), the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse history department, the La Crosse County Historical Society, neighborhood groups and other business and community groups. As volunteers, HPC members already devote much time to heritage preservation. However, they cannot accomplish all preservation goals alone and need community involvement. The HPC shall develop working relationships with organizations and neighborhood groups and encourage them to play an active role in decision making and informing elected officials of their support for heritage preservation. A large contingent of residents in support of a designation at a Council meeting is a powerful and effective statement of community support.
- 2. Work with School District.** Work with the school district to encourage development of curriculum that recognizes cultural resources. Teachers could incorporate local cultural resources into various subjects and take advantage of HPC members' knowledge for special presentations or suggestions for History Day and other special projects.

Objective 8: Information Materials. Provide informative materials about the heritage preservation process and its effects in La Crosse.

Policies/Actions:

1. Economic Impact. Study the economic impact of heritage preservation in La Crosse. A critical means of building support for heritage preservation is to provide information showing how historic character affects economic development as well as cultural tourism. The designation of the Downtown Commercial Historic District has created a new downtown focus and encouraged other development. Similar reinvestment is occurring in historic neighborhoods. Building on the downtown success that culminated in a National Trust for Historic Preservation Great American Main Street award, the Planning Department shall evaluate the economic impact of historic preservation in downtown and in historic neighborhoods. The study will quantify how heritage preservation has had a significant effect on property values and contributes to cultural tourism.



211-215 Pearl Street (1984)



211-215 Pearl Street (2002)



Historic view east on Fourth and Main Streets



Fourth and Main Streets, view east (2002)

2. Informational Materials. In addition to city-wide economic benefits, there are financial and other benefits of historic designation for individual homeowners. The HPC shall update its brochure on the benefits of designation and make it widely available in the community. Other informational brochures shall also be considered to discuss historic districts, design review, or other aspects of heritage preservation.

- 3. Annual Reports.** The HPC ordinance calls for the Commission to issue annual reports on its activities. These publications are an excellent way for the HPC to highlight its work as well as a way of keeping the HPC’s “institutional memory.” Annual reports shall identify buildings and districts designated each year, as well as document historic buildings lost.



**Lavery-Martindale House, 1859, 1869.
10th and Cass Neighborhood Historic District, NRHP.**

- 4. Popular Publications.** Some communities have developed materials that attract support for heritage preservation such as post cards showing historic buildings in the city. A similar approach is to highlight “Lost La Crosse,” either in postcards, a booklet, or display, showing the historic buildings that have been lost. The recognition of important losses can be a catalyst in fostering preservation of the significant resources that remain.



Main Street at Fourth Street

Implementation Program

This section summarizes implementation actions in this Heritage Preservation chapter. Table 12-1 is intended to guide the HPC, Planning Department and Common Council in taking first steps to implement the Heritage Preservation element of the Comprehensive Plan. The HPC and Planning Department shall use the table as a planning implementation tool, revisiting it annually and updating it to establish new priorities and directions.

Table 12-1: Implementation Actions for Heritage Preservation

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	Local District Designations. Designate two NRHP districts as local historic districts	Historic Preservation Commission Common Council
1	Local District Plans. Develop preservation plans with design guidelines for local districts	Historic Preservation Commission
1	Administration. Relocate HPC to Planning Dept. administration	Planning Department Common Council
1	Dedicate Staff. Assign planning staff to HPC	Planning Department
1	Ordinances. Rework existing ordinances	Historic Preservation Commission Planning Department Common Council
1	Review Process. Establish review process in conjunction with ordinance changes	Historic Preservation Commission; Planning Department; Common Council
1	Economic Impact. Study economic impact of heritage preservation	Historic Preservation Commission Planning Department
1 (Ongoing)	Local Designations. Continue to study and designate significant properties	Historic Preservation Commission Common Council
1 (Ongoing)	Planning Process. Include HPC in neighborhood planning	Planning Department
1 (Annually)	Establish Priorities. Establish priorities for designation efforts	Historic Preservation Commission
1 (Annually)	Annual Reports. Publish annual reports	Historic Preservation Commission Planning Department
2	Funding. Secure funding for HPC programming	Common Council
2	Name Change. Change name to Heritage Preservation Commission	Common Council
2	Nomination Form. Improve HPC nomination form with additional information	Historic Preservation Commission Planning Department

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
2	Design Guidelines. Adopt/develop design guidelines	Historic Preservation Commission Planning Department
2	Training. Develop training program for commissioners	Historic Preservation Commission Planning Department
2	Briefing Packets. Develop standard briefing packets on HPC	Historic Preservation Commission Planning Department
2	Working Relationships. Build relationships with organizations and community groups	Historic Preservation Commission
2	Information. Develop handouts and publications about HPC and activities	Historic Preservation Commission Planning Department

Appendix A

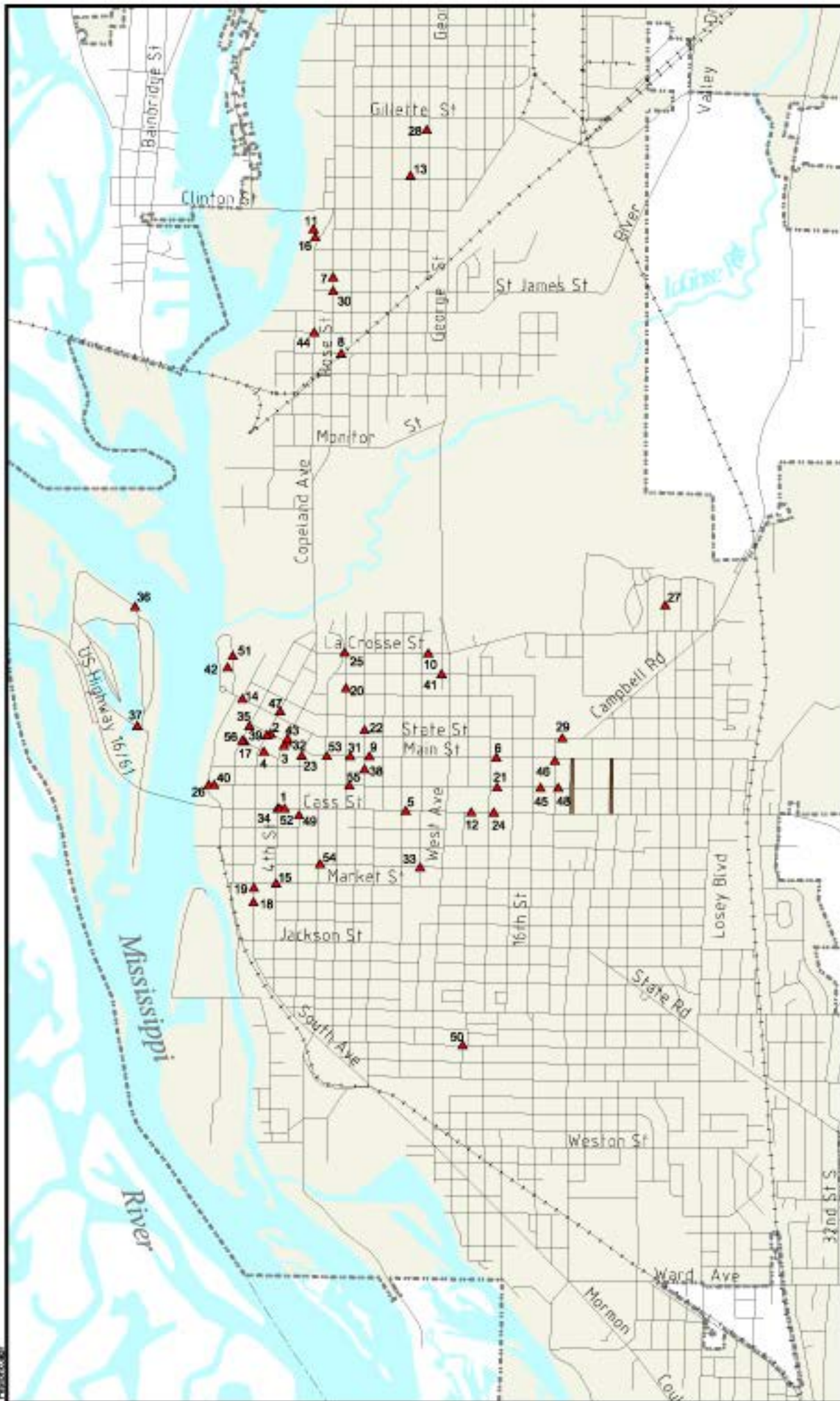
Locally Designated Properties

Map Number	Property Name	Address
1	Anderson, Mons, House	410 Cass Street
2	Batavian Bank Building	319 Main Street
3	Bodega Brew Pub	122 S. 4th Street
N. A.	Brick Streets	
4	Burgermeister Building	323 Pearl Street
5	Burton, Frank A., House	1018 Cass Street
6	Burton, George/Belle, House	1428 Main Street
7	Callahan, John L., House	933 Rose Street
8	Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul Railway Depot	601 St. Andrew Street
9	Christ Episcopal Church	831 Main Street
*	City Cast Iron Drinking Fountains	
10	Concordia Ballroom Hall	1129 La Crosse Street
11	Copeland Park	Copeland Ave & Rose Street
12	Easton/Copeland House	1327 Cass Street
13	Erik/Cathinka Rynning House	1418 Charles Street
14	Funke, Joseph P., Candy Co.	101 State Street
15	German Reformed Church	901 S. 4th Street
16	Grand Crossing Tower/Railroad Car	Copeland Park
17	Grand Hotel Commercial Block	205 Pearl Street
18	Heileman City Brewery Beer Stube	1000 S. 3rd Street
19	Heileman, Gottlieb/Johanna, House	925 S. 3rd Street
21	Hixon, Frank P., House	1431 King Street
20	Hixon, Gideon C., House	429 N. 7th Street
22	Holley, J.M., House	230 N. 8th Street
23	Hollywood Theatre	123 S. 5th Street
24	Holway, N.B./Jessie, House	1419 Cass Street
25	Jacobus House	608 N. 6th Street
25	James Foundry	100 King Street
27	Kendhammer, Frank/Alice, House (Lustron)	751 N. 22nd Street
28	La Crosse Public Library, North Branch	1552 Kane Street
30	Magill Brothers Building	800 Rose Street
29	Main Hall/ La Crosse State Normal School	1725 State Street
31	Masonic Temple	724 Main Street
32	McMillan Building	401 Main Street
33	Original Bishop's House	608 S. 11th Street
34	Ott Pure Oil Station	4th & Cass Street
35	Pamperin Cigar Company Building	113 S. 2nd Street

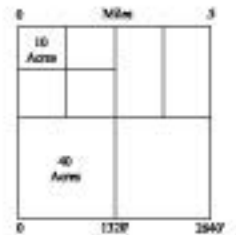
Map Number	Property Name	Address
36	Pettibone Beach House	1002 N. Pettibone Dr.
37	Pettibone Gazebo	1006 S. Pettibone Dr.
38	Pettibone, A.M., House	143 S. 8th Street
39	Potter, William E., Building	107 S. 3rd Street
40	Pump House (Waterworks Bldg.)	119 King Street
41	Rediske Cobbler Shop	507 N. 12th Street
42	Riverside Park (Levee Park)	Levee Park
43	Rivoli Theater	117 N. 4th Street
45	Salzer, Henry, House	1634 King Street
46	Sanford, Albert, House	119 S. 17th Street
47	Schintgen Building	225 N. 3rd Street
48	Scott, Argyle/Jessie, House	1721 King Street
49	Segelke, Charles, House	504 S. 5th Avenue
44	St. Elias Eastern Orthodox Church	716 Copeland Avenue
50	Strasser's Tavern	1310 Denton Street
51	U.S. Fish Control Laboratory	410 E. Veteran's Memorial Dr.
52	U.S. Weather Bureau	432 Cass Street
53	Uhl Row Houses	601 Main Street
54	Washburn, C.C., House	612 Ferry Street
55	Wesley United Methodist Church	721 King Street
56	Zeisler, George, Building	201 Pearl Street

* Not mapped.

Figure 12-2
Locally
Designated
Properties



-  *Locally Designated Properties*
-  *Brick Streets*
-  *Municipal Boundary*
-  *City Limits*
-  *Streets*
-  *Railroad*
-  *City of La Crosse*
-  *Water*



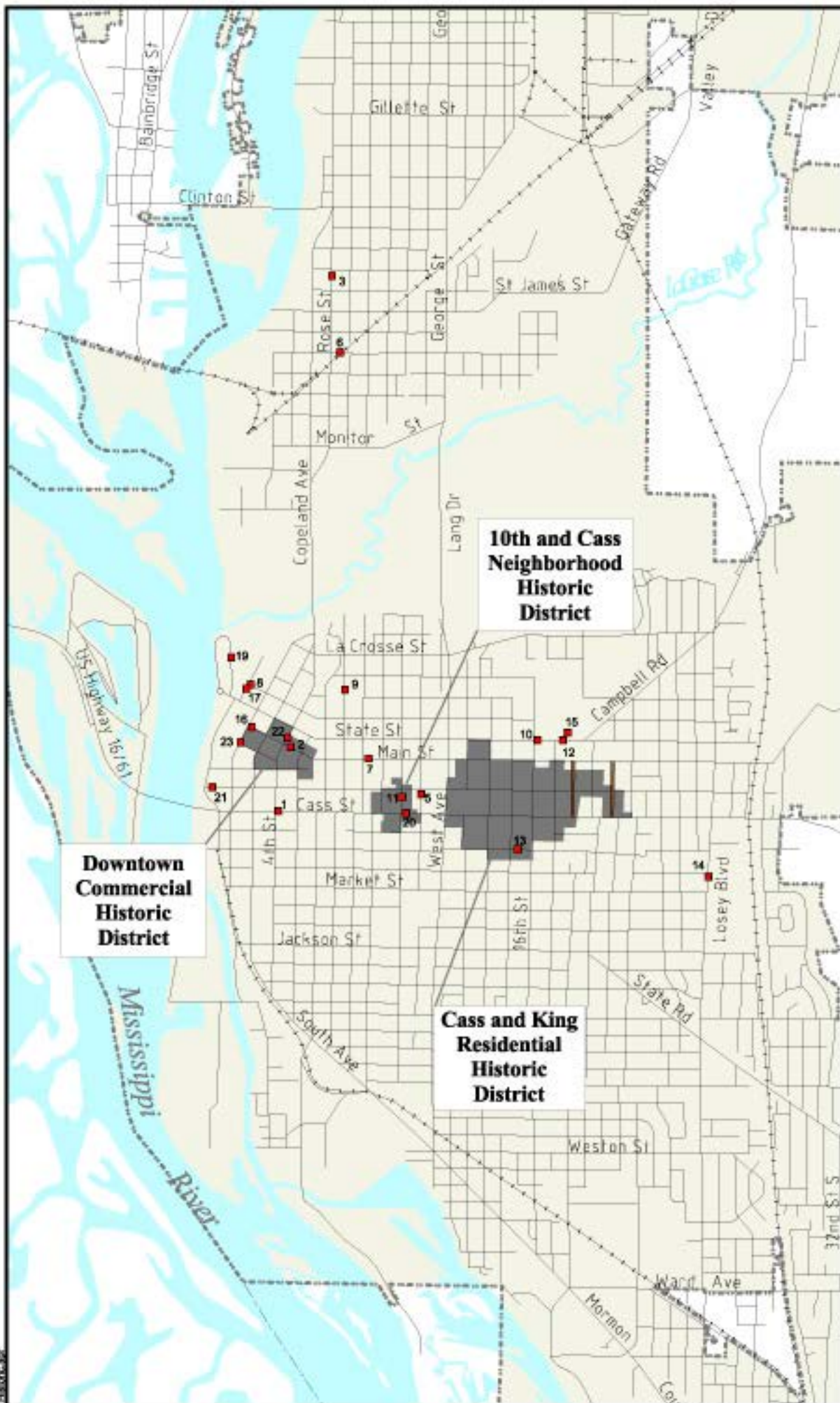
City of
La Crosse
Comprehensive
Plan

Appendix B

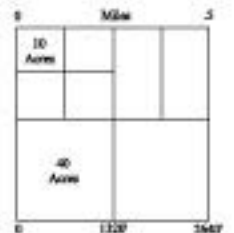
National Register Properties

Map Number	Property Name	Address
N.A.	La Crosse Commercial Historic District	Roughly bounded by Jay Street, 2 nd Street, State Street and 5 th Avenue S.
N.A.	Cass and King Residential Historic District	Roughly bounded by State, S. 21 st Street, Madison Street, and West Avenue S.
N.A.	10th and Cass Neighborhood Historic District	Roughly bounded by Main Street, S. 11 th Street, Cameron Avenue, and S. 8 th Street
N.A.	Overhead Site (archaeology)	S. of La Crosse (not on map)
1	Anderson, Mons, House	410 Cass Street
2	Barron, E. R., Building	426-430 Main Street
3	Callahan, John L., House	933 Rose Street
4	Chambers-Markle Farmstead	6104 State Road 35 (not on map)
5	Chase, Dr. H. H. and Henry G. Wohlhuter Bungalows	221 and 223 S. 11th Street
6	Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul Railway Depot	601 St. Andrew Street
7	Christ Episcopal Church	831 Main Street
8	Freight House	107-109 Vine Street
9	Hixon, Gideon C., House	429 N. 7th Street
10	La Crosse State Teachers College Training School Building	1615 State Street
11	Laverty-Martindale House	237 S. 10th Street
12	Main Hall/La Crosse State Normal School	1725 State Street
13	Ott, Will, House	1532 Madison Street
14	Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel	519 Losey Boulevard S.
15	Physical Education Building/ La Crosse State Normal School	Off U.S. 16
16	Powell Place	200-212 Main Street
17	Roosevelt, W.A., Company	230 N. Front Street
18	Smith Valley School	4130 Smith Valley Road (not on map)
19	U.S. Fish Control Laboratory	410 E. Veteran's Memorial Drive
20	Vincent, James, House	1024 Cass Street
21	Waterworks (Pump House) Building	119 King Street
22	Wisconsin Telephone Company Building	125 N. 4th Street
23	Zeisler, George, Building	201 Pearl Street

Figure 12-3
National Register Properties

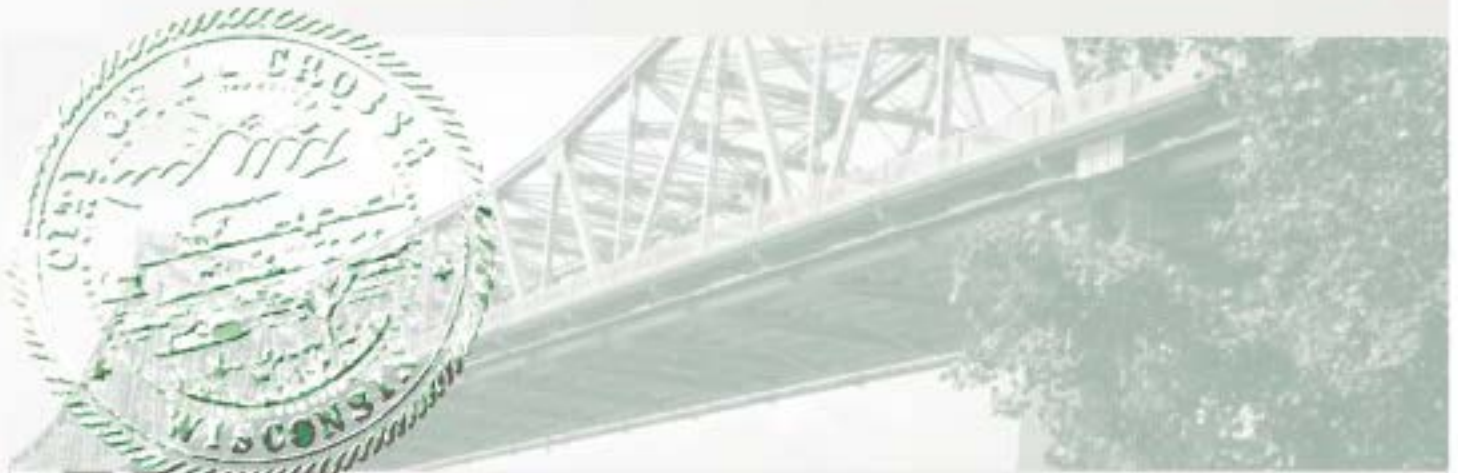


- National Register Properties
- Brick Streets
- Historic Districts
- Municipal Boundary
- City Limits
- Streets
- Railroad
- City of La Crosse
- Water



City of
La Crosse
Comprehensive
Plan

Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

13.0 Intergovernmental Cooperation Plan Element

URS

Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION ISSUES	2
UTILITY SERVICE DELIVERY	2
GUIDANCE FROM THE CONCEPT PLAN	5
OVERVIEW OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION PLAN.....	8
SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES	8
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	9
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM	17

List of Tables

TABLE 13-1: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION.....	17
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Intergovernmental Coordination Plan Element

The purpose of the Intergovernmental Coordination plan element is to outline the City's strategy for improving its role in land use decision making and government service delivery with neighboring governments, the School District, regional entities, the State and other governmental units. The Intergovernmental Coordination plan element establishes a set of goals, objectives, actions and programs for joint planning and decision making with these other jurisdictions.

Intergovernmental coordination in Wisconsin appears to be an oxymoron. This stems from what some consider an overabundance of local government. Conflict points abound in terms of annexation issues and the underlying competition for tax base. As long as cities and villages are viewed as chasing tax base and development and as gobbling up township territory, then conflict will persist. Over the decades, relationships have eroded or are tenuous, thus creating the need for a mechanism for conflict resolution.

The very process of comprehensive planning can help eliminate areas of conflict, identify locations where specific conflicts will occur or attempt to create a mechanism for conflict resolution or joint planning. This plan element calls for better and regular information exchange, cooperative "Smart Growth" planning, cross-boundary planning for elements that extend beyond municipal borders, such as surface water management or transportation, continued sharing of common resources, such as geographic data, long-term boundary agreements, and means of dispute resolution such as negotiation or mediation.

This plan element strives to:

- Reduce or eliminate duplication of services;
- Provide a mechanism for conflict resolution;
- Identify and resolve incompatible goals, objectives, policies and development of adjacent units of government;
- Adopt a set of goals, objectives, actions and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions.

The City utilizes intergovernmental agreements, leases and contracts to coordinate with La Crosse County, the City of Onalaska, adjacent townships, the School District of La Crosse, the State of Wisconsin and the federal government. The Intergovernmental Coordination plan element incorporates plans and boundary agreements that the City of La Crosse is involved with under s. 66.023, 66.30, or 66.945. The City has a municipal boundary agreement with the City of Onalaska pursuant to s.66.023 and S.66.027. This plan

element, after identifying existing or potential conflicts between the City and other governmental units, describes the processes to resolve such conflicts.

Summary of Intergovernmental Coordination Issues

Following is a summary of the major issues, or questions to be resolved regarding Intergovernmental Coordination in La Crosse that were outlined in the Conditions and Issues Report.

Utility Service Delivery

Water and Sewer Services: It has been the City’s long standing policy, although unwritten, to not provide water or sanitary sewer service outside the City limits. This policy stemmed from the City permitting areas in the Town of Shelby and the Town of Campbell to hook on to sewer pipes without annexation. Over time the wisdom of those actions was questioned and resulted in the City’s current annexation policy. As part of the comprehensive planning process, this policy was reexamined for its merits.

- Should the City consider providing water and sewer service outside the City limits without annexation and if so, under what circumstances?

On-Site Septic Systems : To complicate the sanitary sewer issue further, the State government is encouraging low density rural and suburban development through passage and implementation of such rules as the Wisconsin Department of Commerce Rule Chapter, COMM 83 which pertains to on-site septic systems. As noted in the Public Utilities plan element, the proliferation of mound systems and septic tanks works in direct conflict to Smart Growth ideals.

- What can the City do to counteract the proliferation of on-site septic system development?

Regional Facilities

Public Transit: The City has recently expanded service to La Crescent, Onalaska and the Town of Campbell which is paid for by the Federal, State and the local government. The La Crosse Area Planning Committee’s (LAPC’s) regional transportation plan calls for a countywide or regional transit system.

- Should the City move toward a county or regional transit system rather than a municipal system? If so, when and under what circumstances?



La Crosse City Trolley
(photo by Jerome Mooney, 2001)

Group Homes: The City has over 30 group homes/Community Based Residential Facilities. Residents have questioned the siting of new facilities and whether adjacent communities should accommodate more of these types of facilities to achieve a better regional fair share or balance.

- What is the mechanism for determining where to locate additional facilities?

Harbor Commission: The City Planning Department currently staffs the City Harbor Commission and the University of Wisconsin-Extension Agent provides the staff support for the County Harbor Commission. The Port of La Crosse Harbor Plan (1999) recommends that the City and County combine staffing and commission duties in order to have a single entity overseeing the port operation yet there remains opposition to combining the two. United Coulee Region has taken up the cause as well.

- What is the mechanism for combining the two entities and which unit of government should staff the organization if they are combined?

Maximizing Use of Existing Facilities: While the City and the School District of La Crosse have had a long standing arrangement regarding shared use of facilities, there is room for continued or expanded cooperation. Establishing a symbiotic relationship between the City and School District is important because great schools beget great neighborhoods and vice versa.

- How can the City and School Board improve their relationship that is quite cordial regarding use of facilities to other areas of equal benefit?

Regional Planning

Perception of City: The City has been unfairly labeled as being uncooperative with adjacent municipalities. However, the City participates in numerous cooperative agreements with adjacent units of governments.

- How can the City better demonstrate that it has and does cooperate with other units of government?

Comprehensive Plans: The state mandated comprehensive plans are to be in place by 2010. These plans must be coordinated between adjacent municipalities and counties.

- How can neighboring communities coordinate their plans to create a harmonious vision of the future for the area?
- If the various plans are adopted over a period of seven years, how can it be determined if one plan is coordinated with another? Who will make the determination?
- How can the goals of each community be tied to one another to ensure continued economic success for the region as well as maintain the high quality of life in each of those communities?

- How can communities plan when State policies encourage urban sprawl and are in direct conflict with Smart Growth principles (e.g., COMM 83)?

Conflict Resolution: Through the years, conflicts have arisen between the City and other governmental entities, often regarding annexation. Over the last 40 years, the City has expanded its boundary via annexations into three townships. Conflict, in some cases, was avoided by allowing City services such as sewer without annexation. In other cases, conflict could not be avoided and resulted in lawsuits, attempted negotiations, and court settlements.

- How should the City attempt to avoid conflict in the future? What is the preferred method of conflict resolution?

Technology Sharing: The City of La Crosse and La Crosse County are the primary collectors and users of data in the County, yet the City has been unable to provide adequate input into software selections made in the region. The ultimate goal is to create countywide data and geographic data sets that are usable by the public and governmental entities.

- How do the local units of government create a mechanism to agree on the proper type and format of data that is to be shared across all levels of government?
- How can the City be seen as an equal partner in the development of government technology?

Open Space Conservation: The La Crosse area has significant and unique environmental assets that are integral to the desirability of the area.

- What is the best way to ensure cooperation between the State, County, Cities, Villages, and Towns in the region in the conservation of key environmental assets such as the bluffs, the La Crosse River marsh, and the rivers?
- Is it necessary to designate and prioritize vital areas for future protection?

Guidance from the Concept Plan

Both the Conditions and Issues Report and the Concept Plan were based on input from the Citizens Advisory Committee, VisionFest participants, community surveys and key person interviews. Based on this input, the Concept Plan reflects an emphasis on neighborhood revitalization. The Concept Plan outlines several overarching goals that involve intergovernmental coordination. These include:

Compact Growth: Direct most new development to areas currently served by public utilities and roads, and provide additional infrastructure only when available serviced land in the region has been nearly fully used.

- **Annexation.** The City should pursue annexation of fringe areas and work to change annexation laws to give City additional power. The City should continue to abide by a firm policy to not extend sewer or water services without annexation. With the support of La Crosse County, the City of La Crosse should negotiate agreements with adjacent towns for staged annexation and service.
- **Expansion after 2020.** After 2020, the City should evaluate and possibly propose extending sewer and water services into the Town of Barre and the Town of Hamilton south of Interstate-90 in the vicinity of County Roads, B, O, M and OA, annexing those lands, providing additional municipal services and facilities (e.g., fire protection, parks) and buying the two private treatment plants there.
- **Rural Development.** All development in the region except farm buildings should either be served by community sanitary sewer systems or be built at a density no greater than one house per 35 acres.
- **Shared Use.** There should be more shared use of schools for community meetings, activities and events within the budget and operational limitations of the school district.



Development controls can help preserve land in rural areas for active farming

Municipal Growth: Capture some portion of future regional growth and expand the municipal tax base but not at the expense of sacrificing neighborhood revitalization or prime natural resources.

- **Rural Character.** The City should support the efforts of La Crosse County and the Towns to preserve significant farm structures and consider incorporation of such structures in new subdivisions.
- **Annexation of Previously Served Areas.** The City should proactively seek annexation of properties in surrounding jurisdictions currently served by City sewer if such annexation is determined to be financially beneficial to the City in the long term. Annexation should always be required in exchange for the extension of City sanitary sewer service.
- **County Facilities.** La Crosse County should site major County facilities (e.g., libraries, museums, service centers) in the City of La Crosse and support compact regional growth through its sewer, road and transit investments.



North Side Community Library

Regional Planning: Encourage the nearby Towns to adopt plans and zoning consistent with the preservation of agriculture, protection of natural resources and cost-efficient urban growth. Encourage surrounding communities to endorse “smart growth” concepts in their plans.

- **Surface Water Management.** Emphasize surface water management in the city and the townships through a plan and management process that encompasses the entire watershed. “Best management practices” should be followed in all instances.
- **Town Land Use Planning.** The City of La Crosse, with assistance from La Crosse County and the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, should promote plans by Shelby, Medary, Barre and Hamilton Townships to slow the growth of housing in unserved areas by adopting strong land development controls. Zoning in those townships should emphasize a rural density of development (no greater than one house per 35 acres) except in areas served by community sewer systems, where the lots should be small (1/2 acre or less). This will help to preserve agriculture and rural character and make urban expansion more feasible and cost-effective.

- **Natural Corridors.** The City should emphasize the protection of significant environmental corridors for recreation and wildlife movement. There should be a coordinated regional response to the need to identify and protect such resources, led by La Crosse County and including Houston and Winona Counties.



Careful coordination of development between the City, La Crosse County, and surrounding townships is important to accommodate anticipated growth in a manner that is sensitive to significant natural and agricultural resources and provides for cost-effective provision of public services.

Overview of Intergovernmental Coordination Plan

The purpose of the Intergovernmental Coordination plan element is to suggest actions that the City should take to improve communication with its neighbors, improve regional planning, reduce public costs and redundancy in the delivery of municipal urban services and avoid or resolve intergovernmental conflicts. It establishes a framework of actions that the City and surrounding governmental entities must undertake to improve the quality of life for the residents of La Crosse and adjacent communities.

Summary of Objectives

The objectives for Intergovernmental Coordination are summarized below:

Objective 1: Intergovernmental Communication. Improve the exchange of information about municipal and intra-regional issues and build interpersonal relationships that promote communication and cooperation.

Objective 2: Resource Sharing. Identify and share public resources, services and facilities that have cross-jurisdictional use.

Objective 3: Regional Planning. Encourage local units of government to work together to develop and jointly adopt a “Smart Growth” metropolitan plan and county plan.

Objective 4: Town Land Use Planning. Encourage development of land use plans in the adjacent Towns that are consistent with the objectives of *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan*, the *Coulee Visions* study and the aims of Smart Growth.

Objective 5: Regional Conflict Resolution. Take a lead role in the formation of a conflict resolution mechanism that serves the entire metropolitan area.

Objective 6: Boundaries and Service Delivery. Grow the City of La Crosse in a way that benefits the region.

Intergovernmental Coordination Objectives and Actions

This section describes the primary objectives of the Intergovernmental Coordination plan element and provides policy guidance to meet the goals and objectives of *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan*. This section describes actions that need to occur to ensure that the City moves forward in solving intergovernmental coordination issues.

Objective 1: Intergovernmental Communication: Improve the exchange of information about municipal and intra-regional issues and build interpersonal relationships that promote communication and coordination.

Actions:

1. **Annual Leaders' Meetings.** The City of La Crosse shall work with the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, the Mississippi River Planning Commission, and La Crosse County to host an annual meeting of leaders in the Coulee Region. This would consist of an all-day meeting of public and private sector leaders from the communities within La Crosse County and Houston County, Minnesota to discuss planning, service delivery, economic development and quality of life subjects. A noted speaker on a key subject could be invited, and the news media should be encouraged to cover the event.
2. **La Crosse – Onalaska Cooperative Commission.** The City of La Crosse shall continue to participate and contribute to the La Crosse-Onalaska Cooperative Commission. This arrangement was created as a part of the annexation dispute settlement agreement (Municipal Boundary Agreement under Section 66.027 and Section 66.30, Wisconsin Statutes) and the subsequent intergovernmental agreement under Section 66.30, Wisconsin Statutes.
3. **Planners' Meetings.** The City of La Crosse shall actively participate in quarterly planners' meetings. Once La Crosse County hires its County Planner, a quarterly meeting shall be established with the planners and zoning administrators from the area cities, villages and towns to discuss a predetermined subject. Meeting locations should rotate among the communities.



VisionFest

- 4. Improve the Perception of the City.** The City shall work with the local media to improve perceptions of the City. The City shall meet with La Crosse Tribune editorial staff in an attempt to highlight areas of cooperation and as a means of information exchange in the hope of changing the perception that the City is uncooperative with adjacent municipalities.

The City shall use its current intergovernmental agreements to demonstrate the level of intergovernmental coordination. The City currently has agreements, leases and contracts with La Crosse County, the City of Onalaska, the City of La Crescent, the Town of Shelby, and the Town of Campbell. These cooperative arrangements involve public works, water and sanitary sewer, police, fire, park and recreation, transit, information management, recycling, assessing, municipal airport, and personnel.

At the regional level, the City coordinates with the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) on regional transportation issues and planning. The City coordinates with the School District of La Crosse primarily through the City Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. The City Fire Department has an agreement to provide Hazardous Materials release level A and B response with Allamakee County, Iowa. The City also has agreements with Western Wisconsin Technical College, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L), the Health Science Consortium on such items as parking administration, use of facilities and transit services.

- 5. Agency Coordination.** The City shall continue to communicate, cooperate and coordinate its activities with other governmental agencies, including:
- **Federal Agencies:** Federal Emergency Management Agency; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Department of Agriculture; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Commerce; U.S. Department of Transportation.
 - **State Agencies:** Wisconsin Department of Transportation; Wisconsin Department Natural Resources; Commerce; Revenue, Administration; Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; Legislature; and Governors Office.
 - **Regional Agencies:** The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission and the La Crosse Area Planning Committee.
 - **Local Utilities:** Excel Energy, Dairyland Power Cooperative, Vernon Electric, Cable TV franchise, and CenturyTel telephone company.
- 6. Comprehensive Plan Road Show.** The City shall inform area governmental entities about *Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan* through various presentations and displays. The City shall request to make formal presentations to the Town Boards of Shelby, Medary, Campbell, the School District of La Crosse, and the La Crosse County Zoning Committee on the major tenets of the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 2: Resource Sharing: Identify and share public resources, services and facilities that have cross-jurisdictional use.**Actions:**

1. **Geographic Information Systems.** The City in conjunction with other area local governments, led by La Crosse County, shall continue to refine the geographic information system data that they currently share. The City shall ensure that its Geographic Information System will dovetail with the County's system architecture. Digital aerial photographic data will be purchased at least every 10 years through joint agreements between area governmental units.
2. **Technology Sharing.** The City of La Crosse shall participate in establishing a mechanism to ensure the proper type and format of data that is to be shared across all levels of government. The City of La Crosse and La Crosse County are the primary collectors and users of data in the County and the ultimate goal is to create countywide data and geographic data sets that are usable by the public and governmental entities.
3. **Emergency Police and Fire Protection.** The City of La Crosse Police and Fire Departments shall continue to participate in intergovernmental agreements with neighboring jurisdictions for mutual aid response. The City has several mutual aid agreements for police, fire, Haz Mat, drug interdiction etc. and will continue those.
4. **Public Transit.** The La Crosse Area Planning Committee's Regional Transportation Plan calls for a county-wide or regional transit system within the next 15 years. The City shall continue to endorse this proposal and lend its support toward the realization of such a system.
5. **Group Homes.** The City shall propose a regional-fair share approach to locating group homes/Community Based Residential Facilities in the future so that all citizens are given access to fair housing throughout the County.
6. **Harbor Commission.** The Port of La Crosse Harbor Plan (1999) recommends that the City and County combine their staffing and commission duties in order to have a single entity overseeing the port operation. The City Harbor Commission has gone on record as being in favor of combining the two entities while ensuring that there is no loss of autonomy over facilities that are owned and operated by each governmental entity. La Crosse County has not endorsed the merger however, the City shall continue to support this stance should the La Crosse County decide to explore the issue further.
7. **Open Space Conservation.** The City shall continue to be a leader in environmental stewardship of the area's significant and unique environmental assets through involvement and coordination in various programs and planning efforts, including:
 - The Bluffland Protection Program established with the Mississippi Valley Conservancy.

- Implementation of portions of the La Crosse River Valley Study Land Use Plan 6, which calls for the protection and restoration of the La Crosse River Valley.
- Continued participation in the La Crosse River Conservancy project with the City of Onalaska and the Mississippi Valley Conservancy.
- Coordination of planning, regulation (zoning, subdivision) and land acquisition with other area municipalities.



The City, in partnership with the Mississippi Valley Conservancy, will continue to work to protect bluffland from development impacts

- 8. Maximizing Use of Existing Facilities.** The City and the School District of La Crosse shall continue and expand their shared use of facilities where possible. City officials and School District officials will grow their symbiotic relationship to the benefit of the City’s excellent schools and great neighborhoods.

Objective 3: Regional Planning: Encourage local units of government to work together to develop and jointly adopt a “Smart Growth” metropolitan plan and county plan.

Actions:

- 1. Metropolitan Scale Planning.** In the fall of 2005, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) will commence work on a Metropolitan Plan to meet the State’s Smart Growth requirements. That plan is expected to be complete by 2007. Funding for the plan will come from all the communities in La Crosse County to provided detailed guidance for local governments who will need to adopt a comprehensive plan by 2010. The *Coulee Visions Study* will be the foundation of this metropolitan plan and the City shall participate in the long-range planning process to ensure that the planning concepts and tools found in the *Coulee Visions Study* will be included in the next LAPC plan.
- 2. La Crosse County Plan.** The City shall strongly encourage that La Crosse County update and expand its year 2000 County Land Use Plan to encompass the goals of the

Wisconsin Smart Growth, the *Coulee Vision Study*, and *Confluence* as soon as practical. All local units of government, the LAPC, the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission and citizens must be closely involved in the preparation of that plan. The County Plan and all local government plans will be consistent with the LAPC Metropolitan Plan.

3. Surface Water Management. The City shall complete a surface water management plan that encompasses the lower La Crosse River watershed and the coulees just east of the City. The City shall also consider pursuing the creation of a surface water utility with the power to raise revenue and construct improvements. These items are discussed further in the Public Utilities plan element.

4. Transportation Planning. The City shall continue to participate actively and enthusiastically in county and regional programs for road system and transit planning under the leadership of the La Crosse Area Planning Committee.

Objective 4: Town Land Use Planning. Encourage land use plans in the adjacent Towns that are consistent with the objectives of *Confluence*, the *Coulee Visions* study and the aims of Smart Growth.

Actions:

Rural Land Use Planning: The City shall encourage the Towns of Shelby and Medary to plan and zone in a manner consistent with *Confluence*, the *Coulee Visions* study, and Wisconsin Smart Growth principles. This will involve planning for very low density in unsewered development (e.g., one house per 35 acres) so as to preserve options for sewer urban-density development. These densities should be reflected in the Metropolitan and County Plans.



Areas without sewer should be planned for very low density development

Objective 5: Regional Conflict Resolution. Take a lead role in the formation of a conflict resolution mechanism that serves the entire metropolitan area.

The fact that the City hasn't updated its comprehensive plan for 38 years is testimony of why and where conflict has occurred. Many of the major conflicts have involved annexation as the City has expanded its boundary into three adjacent townships. A clearer vision of the City's annexation policies and growth areas over the past 38 years may have helped minimize conflicts with the City of Onalaska. More recently, with the Town of Campbell, a clearly articulated policy could have provided direction regarding a boundary agreement and possibly prevented internal conflict. In some situations a more detailed fiscal impact analysis would have provided community leaders a basis for a more informed decision-making process.

Actions:

1. Conflict Resolution Mechanisms. The City shall, prior to resorting to legal action, utilize a conflict resolution mediator who agrees to comply with the Association for Conflict Resolution's Ethical Standards of Professional Responsibility in cases where intergovernmental disputes involving matters such as land use issues, annexation, surface water management, service delivery, and others.

2. COMM 83. The City shall continue to oppose regulations like the Wisconsin Department of Commerce Rule Chapter, COMM 83, which allows on-site septic systems in areas where they had previously been prohibited. The State government is encouraging low density rural (for example 5-10 acre lots) and suburban development (10,000 square foot lots up to 5 acre lots) through passage and implementation of such rules as COMM 83. As noted in the Utility Plan regarding sanitary sewers, the proliferation of mound systems and septic tanks works in conflict with Smart Growth ideals. The State requires Smart Growth plans, yet provides a mechanism that may undermine the effort.



Large lot residential development off Highway 16 encroaches into the rural area near West Salem.

Objective 6: Boundaries and Service Delivery. Grow the City of La Crosse in a way that benefits the region.

Local government exists to provide necessary and desired public services. To pay for such services at the locally level, communities rely on property tax, state shared revenue, user fees, grants and other source of income. As long as there is a desire for urban services, property owners will seek to annex to communities that can provide such services. While townships and adjacent incorporated municipalities may view annexation as the gobbling up of their territory, cities and villages view annexations as a means to provide a more logical development pattern where development can occur at municipal densities, thereby using up less land. Some development patterns tend to provide a net gain in tax base and therefore municipalities view profitable annexations as highly desirable.

Actions:

- 1. Boundary Agreements.** The City shall manage its growth so that it is compact and contiguous, not sprawling and “leap-frog.” To further these intentions, the City shall look favorably on annexation petitions that are fiscally sound and help it manage growth wisely and efficiently.

The City shall enter into boundary agreements with adjacent municipalities in order to provide infrastructure and services to support efficient and economic urban development, high quality of life and environmental protection. Among these facilities will be parks, parkways, greenways and well-located schools that enhance the value of private investment. Wise urban design standards and zoning will also help protect builders and homebuyers while creating sustainable neighborhoods that provide a wide range of housing.

In addition, the City shall seek long-term boundary agreements that provide certainty and direction to property owners and local governments. Ideally, such agreements would be negotiated in the context of a cooperative metropolitan plan that promotes Smart Growth. Areas planned for urban development should be kept to a very low level of development (no denser than 1 house per 35 acres) prior to the introduction of sewer and water lines, and future road alignments should be protected. Areas planned for agricultural and rural use should be planned and zoned for lower densities (e.g., one house per 35 acres).

The City of La Crosse believes that this approach is in the best long-term interest of the region and in the spirit of the Wisconsin Smart Growth legislation. Thus, the City will propose to conduct joint powers sub-regional Smart Growth plans for land use, public services and jurisdictional boundaries.

- 2. Delivery of Water and Sewer Services.** The City shall only extend water and sewer lines outside its present borders in exchange for annexation of land or in areas where the City has an approved inter-municipal boundary agreement. As part of the comprehensive planning process, the City’s long standing policy (although unwritten) to not provide water or sanitary sewer service outside the City limits was reexamined for its

merits. The wisdom of previously allowing unincorporated areas to receive City utilities was questioned and resulted in the reaffirmation of the City's current annexation policy. To date, the City has established one inter-municipal boundary agreement, with the City of Onalaska.



City water and sewer services should only be provided in exchange for annexation or as part of a boundary agreement.

Implementation Program

This section describes the major actions involved in implementing the Public Utilities plan element. Table 13-1 is intended to guide City staff and the Common Council in setting priorities for capital budgeting and staff allocation. It is expected that this table will be reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, to establish new priorities.

Priority ranking is defined as follows:

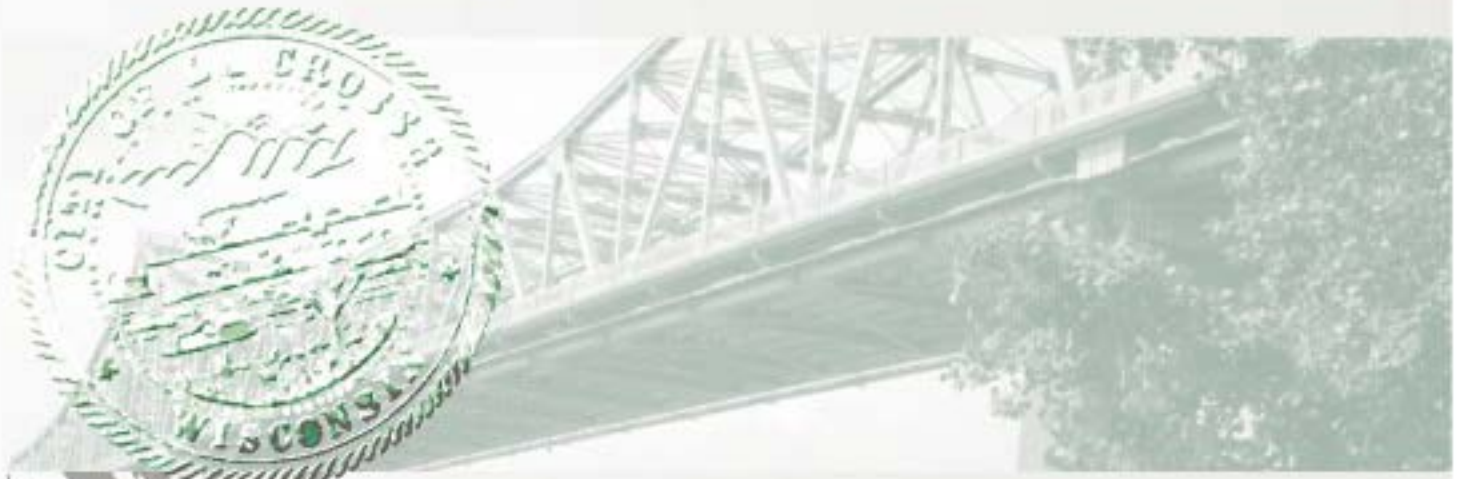
- 1 = highest or short-term priority
- 2 = secondary or mid-term priority
- 3 = lowest priority or represents on-going activities

Table 13-1: Implementation Actions for Intergovernmental Coordination

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
1	Comprehensive Plan Road Show. Inform area governmental entities about <i>Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan</i> through presentations and displays.	Planning Department
1	Metropolitan and Regional Planning. Participate in planning efforts undertaken by La Crosse County, LAPC, townships and others and strive for coordination of those plans with <i>Confluence</i> .	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council La Crosse County La Crosse Area Planning Commission Various towns
1	Open Space Conservation. Continue to participate and cooperate in programs and planning efforts aimed at protecting the natural resources in the Coulee Region.	Planning Department Parks Department Plan Commission Common Council Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Various environmental groups
1	Intergovernmental Communication. Work and participate with other governmental entities in the Coulee Region to foster communication and cooperation through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual leader’s meeting • Quarterly planner’s meetings 	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council La Crosse Area Planning Commission Various towns

Priority	Action	Responsible Agency
2	Boundary Agreement. Enter into boundary agreements with adjacent municipalities to provide infrastructure and services in an orderly, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly manner.	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council [may also include various other City departments]
2	Public Transit. Continue to endorse the creation of a regional transit system.	Common Council La Crosse Area Planning Commission
2	Group Homes. Proposed a regional-fair share approach to locating group homes.	Planning Department Plan Commission La Crosse County
3	Agency Coordination. Continue to communicate, cooperate and coordinate activities with other governmental agencies.	All City Departments Common Council La Crosse County La Crosse Area Planning Commission Federal and State agencies
3	Technology Sharing and GIS. Continue to work with other area governmental entities to improve data and technology sharing.	Planning Department Public Works Department La Crosse County Others
3	Improve Perception of City. Continue to work with local media to improve perceptions of the City.	All City Departments Common Council Local media

Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



Objectives and Actions
(December 19, 2002)

14.0 Plan Implementaion Plan Element

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Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF ISSUES	1
OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	2
SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES	2
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	3
OFFICIALS CONTROLS	3
BUDGETS AND SPENDING	4
STAFF ACTIVITIES	5
PLAN REVIEWS AND AMENDMENTS.....	5
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM	9

List of Tables

Table 14-1: Implementation Plan Actions.....	9
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Implementation Plan Element

There is an old saying in the community planning profession that a plan is only as good as its implementation. The City of La Crosse began to prepare this document with the intention that it would be used by staff and elected or appointed officials on a regular basis to guide decisions. Some plans are approved but are rarely referenced. Hopefully, that will not be the case here. Rather, the planning process itself should generate new attitudes about the comprehensive plan, build new habits of use, and institutionalize the plan's role in City decision-making.

Another planning axiom is that a community plan is only worthwhile if it influences how a City (or other unit of government) writes its regulations or spends its money; leadership and encouragement alone are rarely sufficient to effect changes. Therefore, the plan should provide guidance regarding both regulatory and fiscal decisions.

Summary of Issues

Issues for plan implementation relate primarily to:

- **Implementation Tools:** Having the appropriate tools to implement *Confluence* is critical to make this an effective plan. The most common implementation tools are the City's official controls or codes. In particular, the zoning and subdivision ordinances play a major role in implementing plan actions. It is important that these tools be updated periodically to ensure they remain relevant to address current circumstances.
- **Budget Priorities:** One of the primary functions of *Confluence* is to establish priorities to guide City decisions regarding how money is spent on capital improvements and staffing. The primary issue in this regard is the extent to which the Common Council utilizes *Confluence* to set City budgets.
- **Staff Resources:** In order to implement many of the actions described in *Confluence*, there must be adequate staff to complete and oversee those actions. As a result, staff work programs and priorities will be directly affected by *Confluence*. In addition, the City may need to consider adding staff to complete certain actions.
- **Plan Updating and Amendments:** To be effective, *Confluence* must reflect the broad goals and priorities of the City. As such, *Confluence* should be

routinely reviewed and updated as necessary to remain current. It will be important to establish a clear and participatory process for evaluating and updating the plan periodically. It will be equally important to dedicate staff and other resources to complete such tasks.

Overview of the Implementation Plan

As stated above, a good comprehensive plan should be more than an exhaustive inventory of existing conditions and regulatory tools. Rather, it must provide strategic direction and, most importantly, it must be used and not sit on a shelf. This plan element describes how *Confluence* can be used as a decision-making tool, as well as the tools themselves (i.e., official controls) that will be used to implement many of the plan actions.

Summary of Implementation Objectives

The major objectives for Implementation are summarized below.

Objective 1: Official Controls. Amend the zoning and subdivision ordinances to be consistent with and supportive of the objectives outlined in *Confluence*.

Objective 2: Budgets and Spending. Guide decisions about the City's capital budget consistent with the priorities and objectives outlined in *Confluence*.

Objective 3: Staff Activities. Use *Confluence* to review development applications, prepare area and neighborhood plans, guide redevelopment assistance and direct operational decisions.

Objective 4: Reviews and Amendments. Periodically review and amend *Confluence* to ensure that it remains relevant and usable.

Implementation Plan Objectives and Actions

This plan element describes how *Confluence* can be used as a tool to guide public decision-making and how it should be monitored and updated to remain relevant. It also describes the primary actions the City should take to implement the major plan objectives. It should be noted that all plan elements include an implementation program that is specific to the topics and issues relevant to that element. Therefore some redundancy exists between the implementation actions recommended within each element and those described in this element. This element is intended to distill the primary actions – generally those considered higher priority in the individual elements and those aimed at implementing objectives found in more than one plan element.

Officials Controls

Ordinances are the legal tools used to implement the policies and actions outlined in *Confluence*. Likewise, the comprehensive plan provides the basis and legal foundation for those amendments.

Objective 1: Official Controls. Adopt, amend, and utilize official controls such as a Unified Development Ordinance and official zoning map to regulate land use and development consistent with and supportive of Confluence.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).** The City shall adopt a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that strengthens and incorporates: building design guidelines, street design standards, landscape and screening standards, and storm water Best Management Practices (BMPs). It also establishes a traditional neighborhood development (TND) zoning district and an institutional overlay district. The UDO shall incorporate design standards and guidelines described in the plan elements, in particular the appendices of the Urban Design, Transportation, and Natural Resources plan elements. The UDO should also strengthen park dedication requirements and establish criteria regarding the extension of public utilities.
- 2. Zoning Map.** The City shall adopt an official zoning map to achieve consistency between zoning and the land use designations described in the Land Use plan element.
- 3. Extraterritorial Zoning.** The City shall continue to use its extraterritorial review powers to encourage development adjacent to and beyond the City limits that is consistent with the objectives of *Confluence*.

- 4. Boundary Agreements.** The City shall enter into boundary agreements with adjacent municipalities when appropriate to provide infrastructure and services in an orderly, cost-effective, and environmentally sensitive manner.

Budgets and Spending

The City regularly updates and adopts a Capital Improvement Program - a multi-year plan for revenues and spending on physical improvements. *Confluence* establishes a framework to determine which types of public investments have priority. Each plan element includes an implementation program that identifies and prioritizes actions specific to that element. In addition, criteria described below should be used as guidelines selecting among competing projects. While *Confluence* is not intended to tie the hands of elected officials, it should be used to provide guidance on major decisions affecting budgets, spending, and development. If it is determined after several years that the plan is not useful for this purpose, the plan should be changed and improved.

Objective 2: Budgets and Spending. Use *Confluence* to guide decisions about the City's capital improvements program and other public investments.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Capital Improvements Program.** City department directors, advisory and elected officials shall consult *Confluence* when preparing annual proposals for the City's multi-year capital improvements program. All proposed projects should be ranked on the following criteria:

- Consistency with the objectives in *Confluence*;
- Mandates;
- Prior commitments;
- Project interrelationships; and
- Cost-effectiveness

A perfect convergence of the plan and the capital improvement program will not likely emerge, but a higher degree of consistency should result than if *Confluence* were not formally considered at all. In addition, this disciplined process will force a greater recognition of the importance of *Confluence* in the minds of staff and local public officials and also lead to regular, thoughtful plan amendments.

- 2. Extension of Public Utilities.** City department directors, advisory and elected official shall consult *Confluence* when considering requests and proposals to extend public utilities. In particular, such requests should be reviewed in light of criteria described in the Public Utilities plan element.

Staff Activities

This comprehensive plan outlines many actions for achieving the stated objectives, some of which involve more planning and staff activities. Thus, to faithfully execute *Confluence*, these planning and operational activities should be consistent with the plan objectives, or the plan should be amended to better reflect new thinking or priorities. Many of the following actions may be taken by City staff without direction from the Common Council.

Objective 3: Staff Activities. Use *Confluence* to review development applications, prepare sub-area and neighborhood plans, guide redevelopment assistance and direct operational decisions.

Policies/Actions:

- 1. Development Applications.** The City staff, Plan Commission (and other advisory boards), and Common Council shall refer to the maps, objectives and actions described within the plan elements when reviewing applications for rezoning, conditional use permits, land subdivision or site plan approval. Because the plan's actions are not sufficiently detailed to answer all questions, judgement will be required in many cases to interpret the intention of the plan.
- 2. Sub-Area and Neighborhood Plans.** The City shall prepare more detailed plans for neighborhoods and sub-areas, including redevelopment districts, that are consistent with the objectives and actions of *Confluence*. In turn, *Confluence* may need to be amended to reflect the new or more detailed ideas generated from such plans.
- 3. Operational Decisions.** Daily operational decisions shall also be consistent with the objectives of *Confluence*. These may include actions such as park maintenance (e.g., leaving some park areas in a natural, un-mown state), the level of enforcement of the housing maintenance code, or increased use of bicycle police patrols.

Plan Reviews and Amendments

While comprehensive plans are intended to provide a long-term framework to guide development decisions, they must also respond to the continuous stream of changes that occur in the community that may not have been foreseen when the plan was adopted. This plan element describes how amendments to *Confluence* should occur.

Ideally, the public participation process conducted to help prepare this plan will result in the creation of “champions” for the plan – people who will act as the conscience of the City when it comes to using and maintaining the plan as a decision-making guide.

It is appropriate that some parts of the plan are rarely amended while others are highly subject to examination. The features that should be most long lasting are those that are most fundamental such as the overall goals and the Concept Plan. The objectives of each plan element are more open to revision, and the specific actions are most malleable. Changes to the plan maps would be made periodically, depending on the magnitude of the revision(s). In general, plan maps should be reviewed annually to make sure they are still current.

Objective 4: Plan Reviews and Amendments. Periodically review and amend *Confluence* to ensure that it remains relevant and usable.

Policies/Actions:

1. Annual Reports. Every twelve months the La Crosse Planning Department staff shall prepare a brief report summarizing:

- How the plan was used to direct major spending, regulatory and construction decisions
- How development and redevelopment did or did not coincide with the guidance of the plan
- How the City has changed in ways that may call for amendments to the plan.

Other City departments and related agencies, such as the school district, should be consulted for their opinions about these reports as appropriate.

The report should be transmitted to the Plan Commission and Common Council, and made available to the public. Staff should make brief verbal presentations at Plan Commission and/or Council workshop meetings to call attention to the major findings of the annual report. Generally, plan amendments would not be necessitated in conjunction with these reports, although amendments may be appropriate depending on the reports’ findings. In that case, the Plan Commission and Common Council could direct staff to proceed with amendments as deemed necessary.

2. Plan Amendments. The Plan Commission shall propose amendments to *Confluence* from time to time as circumstances warrant. The public should be notified of these major proposed changes and allowed an opportunity to become informed of the change and comment. The City shall consider neighborhood opinion in evaluating how a proposed change would meet the criteria described below. For major amendments, the City might consider soliciting public

opinion through direct mail survey forms, neighborhood meetings (where applicable) and Plan Commission public meetings.

The most common type of plan amendment will involve changes to land use designations or specific actions. Many of the criteria below relate to those, more minor types of amendments. Should an unforeseen major event occur, such as a significant change in economic conditions, the City may need to undertake a more comprehensive review of *Confluence* to determine if the goals and objectives need to be amended to respond to a major change in priorities or conditions. These are considered “formal” plan reviews and are described under the next action item.

Criteria to Consider When Reviewing Plan Changes
1. The change is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of <i>Confluence</i> .
2. The change does not create an adverse impact on public facilities and services that cannot be mitigated.
3. Development resulting from the change does not create an undue impact on surrounding properties. Such development should be consistent with the physical character of the surrounding neighborhood or would upgrade and improve its viability.
4. The change allows a more viable transition to the planned uses on adjacent properties than the current land use.
5. The change does not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment including trees, slopes and groundwater, or the impact could be mitigated by improvements on the site or in the same vicinity.
6. There is a change in City Actions or neighborhood characteristics that would justify a change.
7. The change corrects an error made in the original plan.
8. There is a community or regional need identified in the comprehensive plan for the proposed land use or service.
9. The change helps the City meet its life-cycle and affordable housing goals.
10. The change does not adversely impact any landmarks or other historically significant structures or properties unless mitigated through relocation, commemoration or dedication.

- 3. Formal Reviews of the Plan.** At least once every **five years**, the City shall instruct its Plan Commission and staff members to conduct a formal review of the entire plan, changing those features and sections that are judged to be out of date and/or not serving their purpose.

At least once every **ten years**, the process for the formal review should involve an *ad hoc* advisory group that assists the Plan Commission. This formal review would be similar to the process used to draft *Confluence*, although not so ambitious in scope and duration.

- 4. Public Participation.** The City shall better utilize the electronic media (Internet, City web site, etc.), news media, and informational mailings to inform and educate citizens and other interested parties regarding planning activities (e.g., meetings, projects), tools (e.g., ordinances), and services used to implement or amend *Confluence*.
- 5. Smart Growth Law Conformance.** In 2009, the City shall review *Confluence* to ensure that it is in conformance with the Wisconsin Smart Growth law. It is anticipated that the Smart Growth statute may have been amended by then.

Implementation Program

This section describes the major actions involved in implementing the Implementation plan element. It compiles the major short, mid, and long-term priorities described in other plan elements. The implementation tables within each plan element should be referenced for a more detailed listing of actions to address issues specific to the topics covered in that element.

In conjunction with the implementation programs specific to each plan element, the following table is intended to guide City staff and the Common Council in setting priorities for capital budgeting and staff allocation. It is expected that this table will be reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, to establish new priorities.

Priority ranking is defined as follows:

- 1 = highest or short-term priority
- 2 = secondary or mid-term priority
- 3 = lowest priority or represents on-going activities

Table 14-1: Implementation Plan Actions

Priority	Action	Responsible Agencies
1	<p>Plan Adoption. The City of La Crosse will formally adopt <i>Confluence</i> as its guiding document for land development and related infrastructure planning, amending ordinances, and preparing capital improvement programs.</p>	<p>Common Council Plan Commission Other advisory bodies</p>
1	<p>Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. Replace the zoning and subdivision ordinances with a UDO to achieve consistency with the objectives outlined in <i>Confluence</i>. The UDO will incorporate the development standards and design guidelines described in various plan elements, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design guidelines for new and infill buildings. • Landscape and screening standards. • BMPs for storm water management and environmental protection. • Street design standards. <p>The UDO also includes creation of several new zoning or overlay districts, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TND district • Institutional Overlay District 	<p>Planning Department Public Works Department Common Council Plan Commission</p>

Priority	Action	Responsible Agencies
1	Annexation Policy. Consistently enforce policy that the City will require annexation prior to extension of public utilities. Establish criteria to evaluate the merits of potential utility extensions and annexations.	Planning Department Public Works Department Sewer and Water Utility La Crosse County Various townships Common Council Plan Commission
1	Redevelopment Efforts. Continue to utilize and explore funding and other incentives to encourage redevelopment and infill development in older neighborhoods, along the riverfront, and downtown using all available tools of assistance including brownfields remediation funds. Systematically prepare plans for and engage in business-like assistance to private investors in targeted locations.	Planning Department. Redevelopment Authority Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Various City departments Plan Commission Other advisory bodies Common Council
1	Proactive Code Enforcement. Establish and maintain adequate staff and other resources to enable timely detection, response, and follow-up to property maintenance and other code violations.	Building Inspections Department Planning Department Police Department Fire Department Attorney’s Office Plan Commission Common Council
2	Bluff Land Protection. Work with La Crosse County, private property owners, the Mississippi Valley Conservancy and others to acquire land and/or easements along the bluff to be held for protection and some public access.	Parks Department Planning Department La Crosse County Conservation organizations Private property owners Common Council
2	Surface Water Management Plan. Collaborate with other governmental entities in the area to develop and adopt a surface water management plan for the entire watershed. This plan would essentially be an extension of the Surface Water Management Plan required under Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Storm Water Permit (see Public Utilities plan element)	Public Works Department Water and Sewer Utility Planning Department Common Council
2	Economic Development Preparedness Plan. Prepare an Economic Development Preparedness Plan using models from around the county.	Planning Department Common Council Redevelopment Authority
2	Park Ordinance Amendment. Amend the ordinance regulating the dedication of land and/or cash to require the dedication of 10 percent of the site or 10 percent of the Assessor’s estimated market value of the land.	Parks Department City Attorney Common Council

Priority	Action	Responsible Agencies
2	New Parks. Conduct studies to determine the best locations, sizes and functions for future parks on the fringe of the city. Acquire these sites in advance of subdivision and/or negotiate with land developers for acquisition during the subdivision process.	Parks Department Planning Department Parks Commission Plan Commission Common Council
2	Sign Controls. Review and revise as necessary, the City’s sign regulations to incorporate the design guidelines contained in the Urban Design plan element. Also consider adopting an ordinance requiring the amortization of all off-premise advertising within 30 years.	Planning Department Plan Commission Common Council Private businesses and sign companies
2	Road Improvements. Continue the process of making capacity and safety improvements to the arterial street system, including signal coordination, turn lanes, some additional lanes and landscaping or decorative lighting in order to help the system accommodate growing volumes while avoiding the solution of building the north-south arterial through the city.	Public Works Department Planning Department Common Council
2	HPC Staff and Administration. Relocate Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) administration from the City Attorney’s office to the Planning Department and dedicate planning staff to work with the HPC, review and process HPC applications and nominations.	Planning Department Historic Preservation Commission Common Council
3	Intergovernmental Coordination. Continue to coordinate planning efforts with adjacent units of government, La Crosse County, the La Crosse Area Planning Commission, and local offices of state and federal agencies. Meet at least once per year with representatives of adjacent communities to discuss matters of common interest in land use, parks, roads, utilities, surface water and economic development.	Planning Department Public Works Department Parks Department Common Council Plan Commission La Crosse County La Crosse Area Planning Commission Various towns and cities
3	Intergovernmental Communication. Continue to work and participate with other governmental entities in the Coulee Region to foster communication and cooperation through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual leader’s meetings • Quarterly planner’s meetings 	Various City departments Common Council La Crosse County La Crosse Area Planning Commission Various towns and cities
3	Sub-Area and Neighborhood Plans. Continue to implement the recommendations in completed neighborhood plans. Work to adopt on-going plans and continue to identify areas where neighborhood or sub-area planning should be initiated.	Planning Department Other City departments Common Council Plan Commission

Priority	Action	Responsible Agencies
3	Streetscape Improvements. Continue to install streetscape improvements such as trees, ornamental lighting, special pavement, and banners in conjunction with street reconstruction, new street construction, or other public improvement projects.	Public Works Department Planning Department Common Council Wisconsin Department of Transportation La Crosse County
3	Development Review. Use the plan daily to review applications to rezoning, subdivision or site plan approval.	Planning Department Public Works Department Other City departments