



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

400 LA CROSSE STREET | LA CROSSE, WI 54601 | P: (608) 789-7512 | F: (608) 789-7318

Memorandum

To: Judiciary and Administration Committee

From: Amy Peterson, AICP, Interim Director of Planning and Development

Date: Tuesday, May 05, 2015

Re: City of La Crosse Transportation Vision

This memo is being provided as further background information regarding the City’s Transportation Vision.

City Plan Commission Report

During the week of February 23-26, 2015, the City of La Crosse held a transportation visioning workshop. The City hired Toole Design Group (TDG) to facilitate the process and, with over 300 people in attendance over four days, there was much public input and learning that took place. Public meetings were held at the beginning and end of the process as well as eight stakeholder meetings and as open studio time that were an integral part of the public participation process.

At the end of the four days, TDG presented a consensus transportation vision for the City to the public. The consensus by the public, stakeholders, and city staff of the Vision is to plan, prioritize, and design changes that help La Crosse to become a beautiful, livable, vibrant, historic, city between the rivers, bluffs and marsh, that is the economic, educational, medical, social, cultural and transportation hub for the region.

Based on the vision, the city will prioritize changes that result in outcomes like safety, walkability, bike friendliness, access, slower driving speeds, fewer vehicle-miles-traveled, complete streets, and beauty; and not prioritize conventional ideas such as reduced delays for motorists, high speed roads, high levels of service for motorists, abundant and low-cost automobile parking, and fighting congestion through road widening.

This vision should be viewed as an update or supplement to the City’s Comprehensive Plan, which is now thirteen years old.

As the City of La Crosse looks beyond conventional transportation design as a way to transform neighborhoods, Downtown and the more suburban style development patterns that occur within the City, we look to both other community examples as well as data driven results. Through the visioning process, from our own research and from the guest presentation at the recent Mayor’s Conference we continue to learn that there are communities

AMY M. PETERSON, AICP, INTERIM PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
 VACANT, PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATOR
 TIM ACKLIN, AICP, SENIOR PLANNER - HERITAGE PRESERVATION
 VACANT, ASSOCIATE PLANNER - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
 LEWIS KUHLMAN, AICP, ASSOCIATE PLANNER - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CAROLINE NEILSEN, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATOR
 ED YOUNG, HOUSING REHABILITATION SPECIALIST
 KEVIN CLEMENTS, ASSISTANT HOUSING REHABILITATION SPECIALIST
 JACOB LAROW, NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE
 DAWN REINHART, FEDERAL PROGRAMS ACCOUNTING TECHNICIAN

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

400 LA CROSSE STREET | LA CROSSE, WI 54601 | P: (608) 789-7512 | F: (608) 789-7318

and state's that are changing the way they design transportation systems, and those changes are having major positive impacts within those communities.

Unfortunately, our conventional transportation system in the country, that exploded transportation development in the 1950's has supported suburban sprawl, long commutes, increased use of resources and pollution, which in turn has degraded cities. This conventional system is founded in data and research that promotes continual expansion of automobile centric transportation systems.

There are multiple large transportation projects currently in the planning and design phase within the City of La Crosse. This vision provides citizens and staff with a benchmark to gauge future designs and to ensure that they will increase livability and vibrancy within our City. These transportation projects will affect our City for 30-75 years. Now is the time to shift from conventional transportation design to traditional; to reward the short trip, to accommodate many users, to increase access, to nurture businesses, and ultimately to create more vibrancy in our City through our transportation design decisions.

Alternative Design Options, based on Vision

Through the visioning process and with TDG, the City has looked for alternatives to conventional road designs in our City. Below are two examples of re-designs for both Rose Street and South Avenue. TDG continues to work and refine the ideas for Rose Street, and WisDOT provided the refined alternatives for South Avenue.

Exit 3/Rose Street

As was described during the Visioning process, there was at least one better option for the design of Exit 3's interchange that was not considered in the EIS. Pursuing the better option was discouraged by WisDOT because that pursuit would delay the construction of the selected option for the interchange. Consequently, TDG was asked to limit their recommendations to Rose Street and not change the basic concept of the selected interchange option.

Given the above constraint, the following objectives are still legitimate for the design of the street along the waterfront in La Crosse:

- 1) Create **better access** to the waterfront for pedestrians and cyclists;
- 2) Make the street **safer** for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians;
- 3) Make the street and waterfront **more comfortable** for cyclists and pedestrians;
- 4) Transition from a high-speed design vocabulary of the highway to a **city-friendly design vocabulary**, on Rose Street;
- 5) Design the street with an appropriately **low design speed** in keeping with the goal of **reducing the property damage and probability of death or injury** should property or a pedestrian or cyclists be struck by a motor vehicle;

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

400 LA CROSSE STREET | LA CROSSE, WI 54601 | P: (608) 789-7512 | F: (608) 789-7318

- 6) Design the street that results in lower speeds to **reduce tire noise** to increase the **enjoyment of people** walking and cycling along the waterfront;
- 7) Design the street to be **friendly to redevelopment** on the east side of the street;
- 8) Design the street to **create a valuable address** for mix use buildings; and
- 9) Design a public waterfront that is **city-friendly and people-friendly place**.



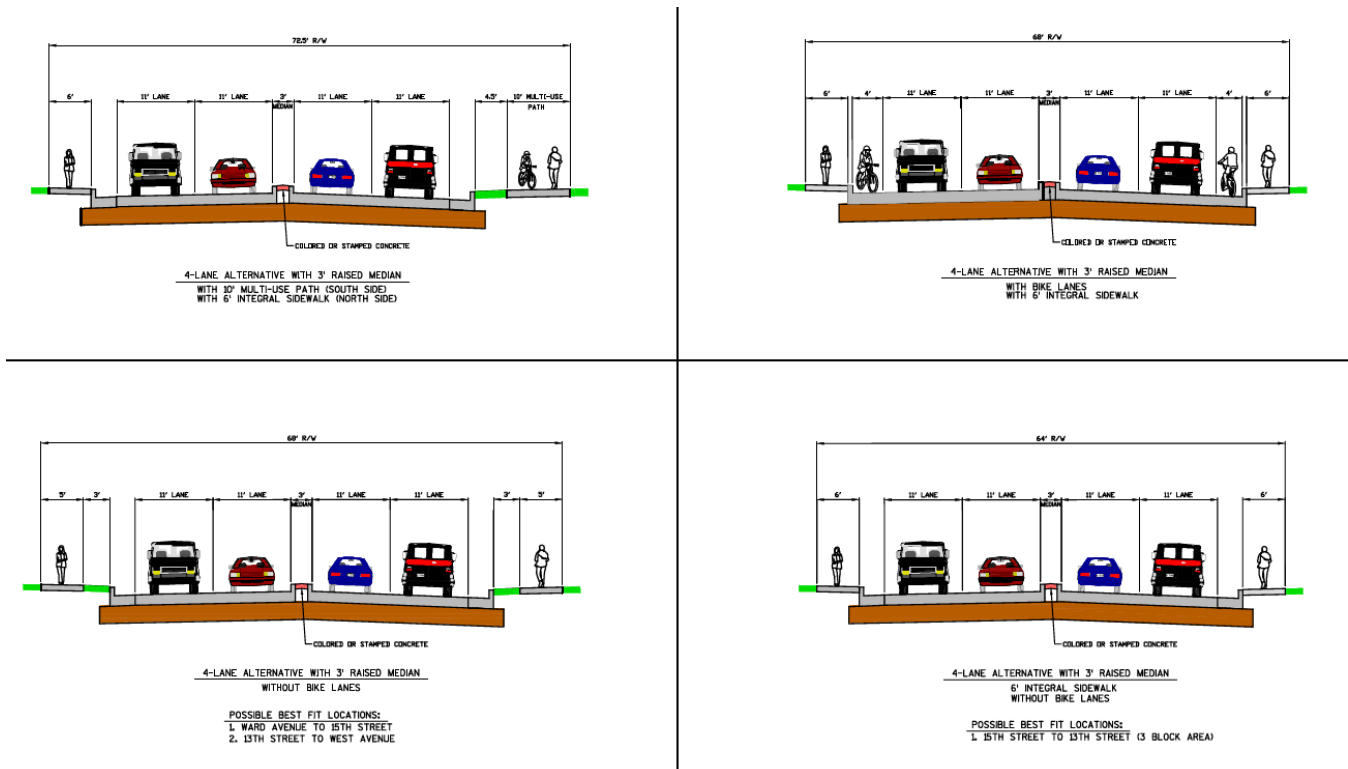
Rose Street alternative design – narrowing lanes; providing alternate transportation options; providing more greenspace between the street and the River; providing a business friendly environment on the west side.

South Avenue

This is one of the alternative designs WisDOT put together. An alternative design, along with roundabouts can greatly reduce the amount of acquisition necessary, thereby preserving tax base and potentially increasing value along the City's streets. The vision also speaks to the value of the City's transportation grid system which will help in working with WisDOT to eliminate the proposed number of cul-de-sac streets in the design.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

400 LA CROSSE STREET | LA CROSSE, WI 54601 | P: (608) 789-7512 | F: (608) 789-7318



US 14 TYPICAL SECTIONS - MINIMIZED 3' MEDIAN

More information on Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) refers to various strategies that change travel behavior (how, when and where people travel) in order to increase transport system efficiency and achieve specific planning objectives. TDM strategies influence these factors to encourage more efficient travel patterns, such as shifts from peak to off-peak periods, from automobile to alternative modes, and from dispersed to closer destinations. There are numerous strategies using various approaches to influence travel decisions. There may be several steps between a particular TDM policy or program and its desired outcomes. Although many TDM strategies have modest impacts, their cumulative and synergistic impacts can be great. A comprehensive TDM program can often affect a significant portion of total travel and provide large total benefits. Therefore it is important to have a complete TDM plan, rather than depend on individual strategies.¹

The parking and TDM section of the vision provides strategies that the City may employ as part of a TDM program.

¹ "Victoria Transport Policy Institute Online TDM Encyclopedia", <http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm12.htm>, May 5, 2015.