

# Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan



*Objectives and Actions*  
(December 19, 2002)

## **11.0 Economic Development Plan Element**

**URS**

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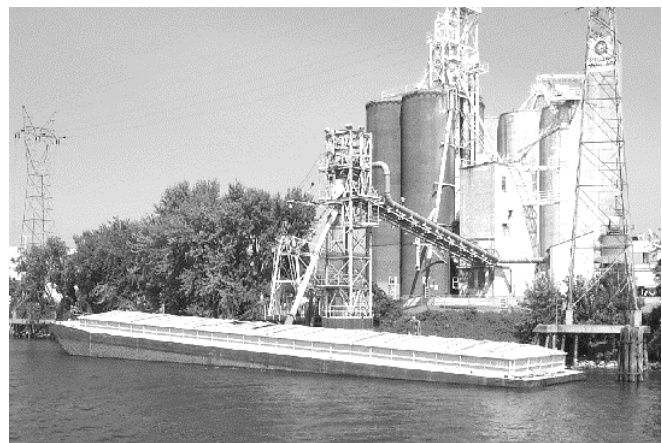
# Economic Development Plan Element

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.

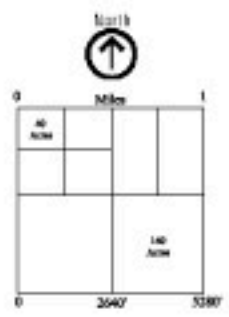
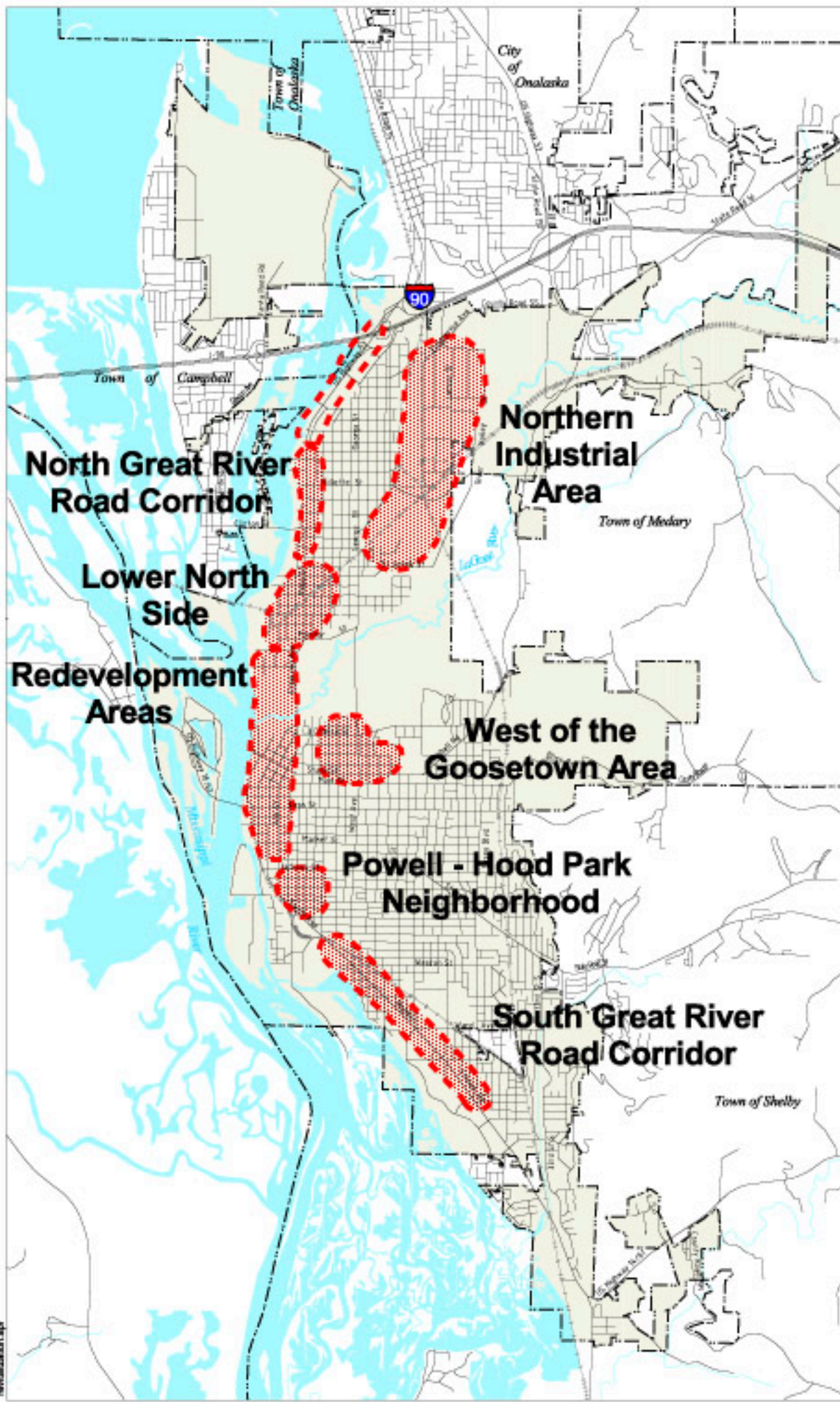
**Policies/Actions:**

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 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between Jay and King Streets
  - The former Frank Liquor Site
  - The former G. Heileman Warehouse at 2<sup>nd</sup> 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



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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 8<sup>th</sup> 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

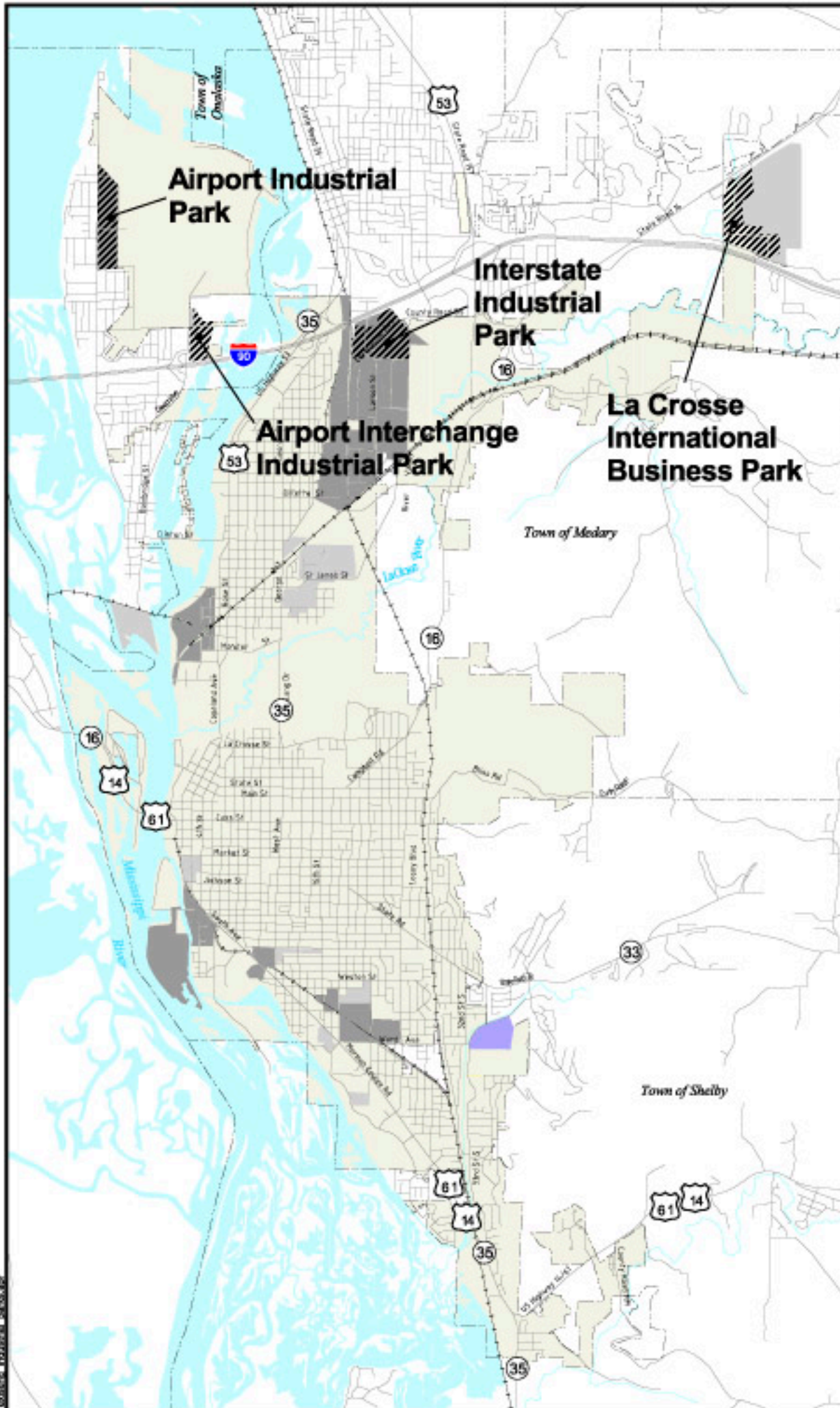
**Objective 9: Promote Manufacturing Sector. Provide a balanced approach to economic development that encourages manufacturers to grow and do business in La Crosse.**

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.

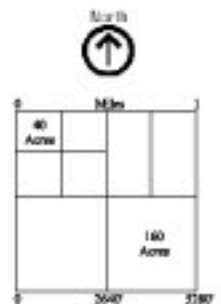
**Policies/Actions:**

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
  - Railroads
  - Roads
  - Industrial Parks
- Land Use Designation**
- Light Industrial
  - Heavy Industrial
  - Business Park



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## 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	<b>Economic Development Preparedness Plan.</b> 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	<b>Community Development Corporation.</b> Create and partially fund a CDC organization to foster neighborhood level economic development activities.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority
1	<b>Complete Current Projects.</b> 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	<b>Facilitate Redevelopment.</b> 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	<b>Utilize Redevelopment Authority.</b> Better utilize the Redevelopment Authority powers and tools to achieve redevelopment objectives.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority
2	<b>Land Inventory and Priorities.</b> 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	<b>Technology Zone Designation.</b> 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	<b>Promote Technical Assistance Programs and Education.</b> 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	<b>Downtown and Riverfront Redevelopment.</b> Continue to focus redevelopment efforts in the historic downtown and along the riverfront.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority Plan Commission
3	<b>Brownfield Funding.</b> 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	<b>Active Organization Involvement.</b> 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	<b>Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program.</b> 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	<b>Long-Range Economic Forecasting.</b> 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	<b>Creation of Coulee Region Industrial Park Corporation (CRIPCO).</b> Continue to actively participate in discussion regarding creation of a CRIPCO type organization in the Coulee Region.	Common Council Planning Department Redevelopment Authority