

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market



Prepared for the City of La Crosse, WI



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Table of Contents



- Acknowledgements..... p. 3
- Summary of Feasibility Study Findings..... p. 3
- How Can A Public Market In La Crosse Be Successful?..... p. 4
- Important Criteria for Siting A Public Market..... p. 5
- Sites Considered and Not Selected..... p. 7
- Three Sites Selected for Analysis..... p. 8
- Matrix Analysis of Three Selected Sites..... p. 15
- Strengths and Weaknesses of the Three Primary Possible Sites..... p. 21
- Recommended Site..... p. 23
- Suggested Mitigations for Weaknesses in the Recommended Site..... p. 31
- Next Steps..... p. 31
- Conclusion..... p. 32

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Any mistakes or oversights are solely the responsibility of the author.

Summary of Feasibility Study Findings

This Site Analysis follows the production of an earlier Feasibility Study entitled “A Public Market In La Crosse? A Feasibility Study”.

The earlier report examined the feasibility of locating a Public Market in La Crosse. It found that La Crosse has tremendous resources and assets which could lead to a successful Public Market. La Crosse combines a relatively youthful, well-educated population with tremendous economic need among many of its citizens. The Feasibility Study noted that while La Crosse’s businesses enjoy hundreds of millions of dollars in shopping from its roughly 300,000 regional residents, it remains significantly undersupplied in fresh and prepared food venues that would form the core of a La Crosse Public Market.

La Crosse residents would enjoy the social benefits that a Public Market would bring. Its surrounding agricultural economy would improve and its existing businesses, especially those located downtown, would derive substantial economic benefits from a properly executed Public Market. In addition, the community development enhancements that a Public Market would bring to La Crosse’s many strong neighborhoods would be significant.

Of the scores of other Public Market Feasibility Studies written by this author, roughly 1/3 of these reports recommend not proceeding for a variety of reasons. However, in the case of La Crosse, the Feasibility Study suggested that a Public Market would not simply be feasible but that it would be transformational and would help to address many of La Crosse’s most intractable issues. The Feasibility Study suggested how to establish and maintain a healthy and vibrant Market environment. It also detailed what creates a successful Public Market and why La Crosse is ripe for such a Market. A draft Mission and Goals for the Public Market was proposed.

The earlier Study examined 18 separate non-economic, non-demographic criteria that are critical to establishing a successful Public Market. It went on to examine growth trends, complementary and competitive uses, and the underlying economic and demographic details

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

that undergird an examination of a Public Market's feasibility. The report detailed where the customers, vendors, and farmers would come from. Supply and demand statistics were presented and recommendations were made regarding how the Public Market could be supportive to its surrounding communities. The Feasibility Study examined the viability of a Public Market through the lens of geography, accessibility, demographics, economics, a demand analysis, visitor characteristics, and existing uses. The Study concluded that the Public Market and its associated components and enhancements would be feasible in La Crosse.

How Can a Public Market In La Crosse Be Successful?

The earlier Feasibility Study, especially in its Mission and Goals, spells out many of the characteristics that will need to go into maximizing the success of the La Crosse Public Market. The next document to be created, "A Business Plan for the La Crosse Public Market", will have a detailed Design Program, Tenant Leasing Plan, and Budgets. It will go into the specific components necessary to achieve the kind of successful Market that the community needs and deserves.

There are, however, a number of underlying characteristics and values that are needed for the La Crosse Public Market to maximize its success. The following overarching principles should be followed:

- The Market needs to be a regional facility. While enhancing the existing downtown, the Market's tenant and marketing mix needs to reach out to the surrounding 300,000 potential shoppers in the greater region.
- The Public Market needs to be a 6- or 7-day, year-round facility with a full complement of events, specials, and celebrations that occur throughout the year.
- The Market should be fun! It needs to be an entertainment and recreational destination, not just a place to shop. It should be enjoyable, exciting, and a unique experience for its visitors.
- The Public Market should appeal to the full spectrum of the region's economic, ethnic, and racial customer base. This should be reflected in diverse tenants, special events, and advertising. It should be a common ground where the entire community comes together in a safe, welcoming, and fun environment. La Crosse subpopulations, such as the Hmong community, should be featured in shops and products.
- The Market needs to reflect what is unique and special about La Crosse. Local products should be highlighted. Owner-operator shops should reflect the community's heritage, without chain stores or franchises.

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

- There should be a significant selection of ethnic foods that are not easy to find elsewhere in the area.
- The Market needs to pay attention to meeting the everyday shopping needs of its customer base, particularly for fresh foods and secondarily for prepared foods, crafts, and other needed neighborhood amenities.
- The Public Market should be a sensual experience. There should be many vendors producing their products on site with good smells and wonderful aesthetics.
- The Market should be a great place for kids and families. It should be both educational and entertaining.
- The Public Market should have uses that appeal to the significant, adjacent student population in La Crosse.
- The Public Market should work closely with the other organizations in La Crosse that boost its business, recreational, health, and entertainment environment.
- The Public Market should include enhancements such as a community meeting room, a community kitchen, and public art.
- The Public Market should enhance the reasons that visitors come to La Crosse and that its residents love to live here.
- In creating the La Crosse Public Market, equal attention needs to be paid to designing the outdoor environment as well as the actual indoor Market building.

In short, the La Crosse Public Market should be a facility that is unique to the surrounding community, showcases the community's assets while meeting its residents' everyday shopping needs.

Important Criteria for Siting A Public Market

There are over three hundred Public Markets in the United States. Virtually all are successful. However, siting a Public Market in the proper location is critical to its success. There are many diverse generic factors that should be considered in finding the best location for a Public Market in La Crosse.

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

The following list applies to Public Markets generally. The matrix that follows this list applies to specific sites in La Crosse.

In choosing a good site for a Public Market, the following criteria are ideal:

- Public Markets should be sited in locations that are no one's existing turf so that they can become everyone's turf.
- Markets often succeed best on the outside perimeter near downtown abutting a mixed-income residential neighborhood.
- Surrounding demographics help determine the Public Market's size and tenant mix.
- Positive, complementary neighbors are essential to the success of the Market.
- It is important to locate in an area where future development is possible and desired, in order to take advantage of the increase in surrounding property values that the Public Market will bring.
- Ideally, interesting and appropriate historic architecture, if available, is suitable for a Public Market.
- Appropriate building size on the ground floor, keyed to the community's potential customer base with adequate parking.
- A history in the community of high attendance at special events, especially food related special events – 'Taste of the City'-type events and festivals.
- A site that allows for additional surrounding outdoor space to accommodate public amenities that can cement the Market's reputation as a regional destination. In La Crosse, if possible, the Public Market should tie into the recreational, entertainment, and view amenities presented by La Crosse's wonderful rivers.
- Land/building availability with high visibility/location near a recognizable landmark.
- Reasonable access via public transportation with close proximity to intensely used amenities.
- Ability to expand and benefit surrounding neighborhoods.
- Acceptable competitive and complementary factors.
- A cooperative municipal government that understands and supports the notion and opportunities presented by a true Public Market.

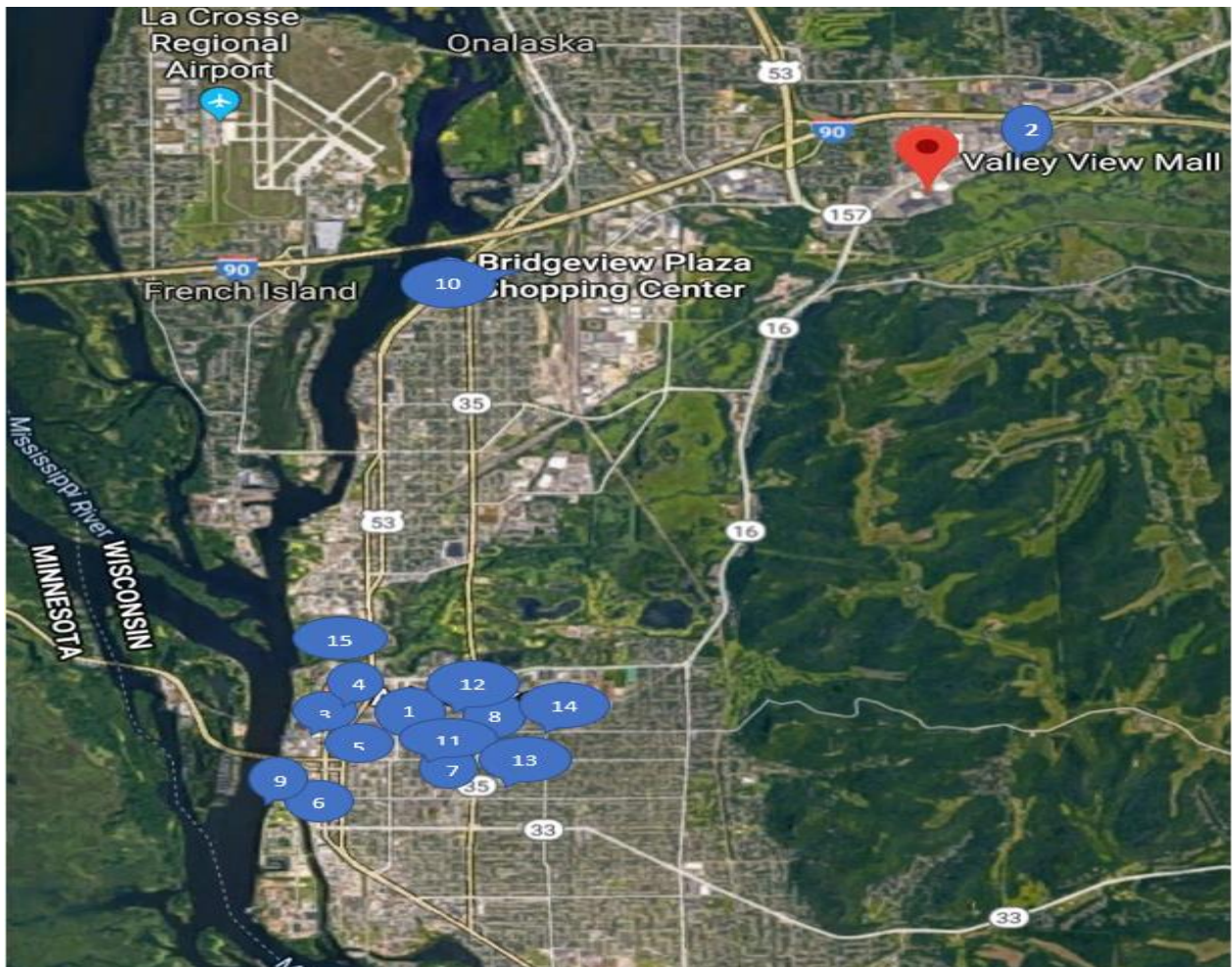
Sites Considered and Not Selected

During the course of preparing this site analysis, many sites were examined, evaluated and rejected. Some were rejected after a cursory look. Others, after an in-depth assessment.

All were excluded for a variety of reasons, including one or more of the following:

- *Site was too small
- *Largely unusable due to potential flooding
- *Poor visibility
- *Inadequate for a retail location
- *Too expensive
- *Difficulty with acquisition
- *Not helpful enough to the existing downtown
- *Difficult access

These sites are located on the map below:



Key to the Rejected Sites on the Map – see below:

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

- 1) Landmark by the Rivers commercial area
- 2) Valley View Mall
- 3) Stand-alone Oktoberfest Grounds
- 4) Parking lot in front of Charmant Hotel
- 5) First Supply Site near bridge
- 6) 129 4th St. South parcel
- 7) Cameron Park
- 8) Piggy's Restaurant
- 9) Bridgeview Plaza
- 10) Bimbo Bakeries USA
- 11) La Crosse Tribune
- 12) 215 Pine St.
- 13) Church site at 136 8th St. South
- 14) Riverside North site closer to River
- 15) First Supply Warehouse site at 515 2nd St. South

Three Sites Selected for Analysis

After analyzing these potential sites, three were selected for final comparative analysis.



Three Selected Finalist Sites Located in Relation to Downtown

Riverside North Site:

Riverside North is a +/- 65-acre mixed-use planned development incorporating multifamily housing, commercial, civic, parking, recreational, office, and retail uses on land owned by the City's Redevelopment Authority (RDA). It is bound by Copeland Ave. on the East, the Black River on the West, Causeway Blvd. on the North, and the La Crosse River to the South. About 30 acres are wetlands. The proposed Public Market site is located to the southeast of the overall site at the corner of Copeland Ave. and River Bend Rd. The possible site is 2.8 acres. Currently there are no buildings on the site.



Riverside North Site at Copeland Ave. and River Bend Rd. Shown Outlined in Blue on the Lower Right

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market



Riverside North Context

Post Office Site:

The City of La Crosse is working with the United States Postal Service on the potential acquisition of the Downtown Post Office site located at 425 State St. If acquired, the existing building would likely be torn down. The site is 3.8 acres and includes a 63 space surface parking lot. The site is bound by 4th St. N., Vine St., 5th St. N., and State St.

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market



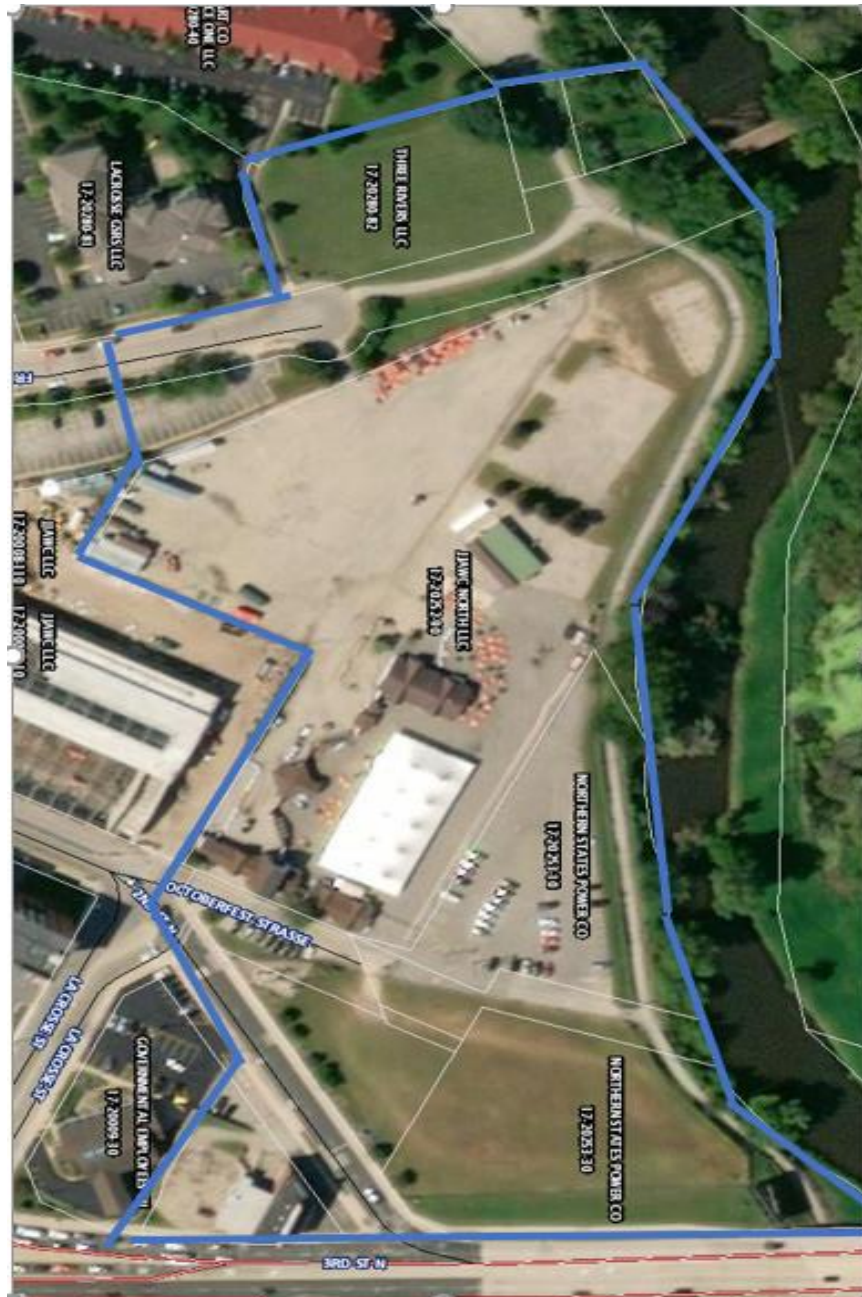
Post Office Site Outlined in Blue



Post Office

Riverside Festival Site:

The “Riverside Festival Site” is comprised of several parcels owned by a number of public and private entities. The site includes the home of the annual Oktoberfest festival. The City of La Crosse is in discussions with Xcel Energy, with the aim of acquiring their property. Some of the other private entities have been contacted regarding acquisition. The total site is roughly 11.974 acres and includes an existing 72 space surface parking lot on an Xcel parcel.



Riverside Festival Site Outlined in Blue

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market



Riverside Festival Site Outlined in Blue.

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

Parcel	Address	Current Owner	Tax #	Zoning	Size	Assessed Value	Net Property Taxes
A	400 La Crosse St.	City of La Crosse	17-20280-30	R-6	.156 Acres	NA	\$0
B	201 Front St. N.	Three Rivers LLC	17-20280-82	PD	.88 Acres	\$365,000	\$8,898.81
C	Front St N	City of La Crosse	NA	NA	?	NA	\$0
D	Front St.	Centurytel of Wisconsin LLC	17-20280-90	C3	1.980 Acres (possible less)	NA	\$0
E	500 Front St. N.	JJAWC North LLC	17-20252-90	C3	6 Acres	\$1,133,100	\$38,316.64
F	600 2 nd St. N.	Northern States Power Co.	17-20253-90	Multi-zoned	.360 Acres	NA	\$0
G	600 2 nd St. N.	Northern States Power Co.	17-20253-90	Multi-zoned	Part of 'F'	NA	\$0
H	Oktoberfest Strasse	City of La Crosse	17-20253-300	M-2	.270 Acres	NA	\$0
I	615 2 nd St. N.	Northern States Power Co.	17-20009-20	M-2	.42 Acres	\$863,000	\$21,040.98
J	711 3 rd St. N.	Northern States Power Co.	17-20253-30	M-2	1.709 Acres	NA	\$0
K	615 2 nd St. N.	Northern States Power Co.	17-20009-20	M-2	Part of I	Part of I	Part of I
L	201 Front St. N.	City of La Crosse	17-20280-60	R-6 (?)	.2 Acres	NA	\$0

Key to Above Riverside Festival Site

Matrix Analysis of Three Selected Sites

#	Site	Post Office	R a t i n g *	Riverside North Site	R a t i n g *	Riverside Festival Site	R a t i n g *
1	Address(es)	425 State St. 200 5 th Ave. N.		11 Copeland Ave.		711 3 rd St. N, 615 2 nd St., N. 600 2 nd St. N., 400 La Crosse St., 201 Front St. N., 500 Front St. North.	
2	Parcel #(s)	17-20021-90, 17-20037-120 and 17-20169-20		17-20251-100		17-20253-10, 17-20253-30, 17-20253-90, 17-20009-20, 17-20280-30, 17-20280-82, 17-20280-90, 17-20252-90, 17-20253-90, 17-20253-300, 17-20009-20, 17-20280-60	
3	Current Owner(s)	U.S. Government		City of La Crosse Redevelopment Authority		Northern States Power Co., JJAWC N. LLC, 3 Rivers LLC, CenturyTel of Wisconsin LLC, City of La Crosse.	
4	Site size	3.8 acres	3	2.8 acres	1	11.974 acres	3
5	Existing uses	Post Office + Parking	1	None - (Temporary Leased Parking)	2	Oktoberfest bldgs., Vacant, Parking, Car Title/Loan Bldg.	3
6	Current zoning	PS - Public and Semi Public		Planned Development		Multiple - See Table above	
7	Size adequacy	good	2	small	1	excellent	3
8	Current property taxes paid	Nontax paying		Nontax paying		Mostly Nontax paying See Table above	
9	Site acquisition cost	Unknown		RDA-owned		Various	
10	Site availability	In process	2	Currently RDA owned. Site will need to be timed with buildout.	3	Xcel in process. Title Loan Bldg. owned by the City	2
11	Parking available?	Current site (prior to demolition) has roughly 63 surface parking	2	Currently, there is no existing parking on the site. The City has expressed a desire for no	1	The existing site has 72 surface parking spaces. It is large enough to add sufficient additional parking if	3

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

		spaces. The City owned Main St. Parking Ramp is one block away. It has 395 parking spaces.		visible surface parking on the site. A decked or covered lot would likely be necessary.		non-leased spaces are available. The site is 2 blocks from the City owned Pine St. Parking Ramp which has 605 spaces. As part of a Master Plan, shared parking in this area should be considered.	
1 2	Ease of Access	More centrally located downtown. Somewhat congested.	2	May need a light with left turn signal from Copeland coming from the S.	1	Potentially great – If Master Plan is developed and followed. May need circulation enhancements	3
1 3	Near recognizable landmark?	Belle Square, Children’s Museum and Public Library are within 3 blocks.	2	None currently	1	Oktoberfest site, Hampton Inn, Riverside Park & Gardens, City Hall, Freighthouse Restaurant & Charmant Hotel are all within 2 blocks	3
1 4	Adjacent uses	Downtown retail, Belle Square and legal related.	3	Abra Auto Body, Riverside North buildout	1	Oktoberfest grounds, Landmark by the Rivers mixed-use project	3
1 5	Potential catalytic impact on nearby development	Within 2 blocks, downtown is mostly built out.	1	Would help Riverside North development	2	Several underutilized sites within 2 blocks. Oktoberfest grounds are often not used. Master Plan would transform a major City gateway.	3
1 6	Capacity to expand	Constrained by surrounding uses	1	Could be part of other Riverside North uses	2	Large site could accommodate complementary uses such as housing. Could enhance Oktoberfest grounds and provide reciprocal parking.	3
1 7	Connection to recreation uses/river?	No immediately adjacent green space	1	While near wetlands, site is not immediately adjacent	1	On the La Crosse River, pedestrian/bike path	3
1 8	Impact on downtown	Very positive for downtown	3	Medium impact on downtown	2	Very positive for downtown	3
1 9	Proximity to Farmers Market	3 blocks from Cameron Park	1	12 Blocks from Cameron Park FM	3	10 blocks from Cameron Park FM	3

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

		FM. Probably, too close for a new, stand-alone FM					
20	Close to customer base?	100,007 potential customers within 20-minute drive*	*	102,256 potential customers within 20-minute drive*	*	102,008 potential customers within a 20-minute drive*	3
21	Close to compatible uses?	Downtown is full of compatible uses with Belle Square, 93-residential units, across the street.	2	Not currently. Hopefully after buildout	1	Many compatible uses nearby – recognizable hotels, restaurants, festival grounds, recreation connections	*
22	Any Political considerations or constraints?	Will help fill a significant hole in Downtown	3	Will help Riverside North development	3	Helps activate an important gateway area that is currently unsightly & unused for much of the year.	3
24	Potential if not developed as a Public Market	Remain as Post Office or redevelop for other public service uses	2	Mixed use similar to balance of Riverside North	2	Possible high-rise housing due to good views	3
25	Can it accommodate other public priority uses?	Incorporate current Postal Service uses, possible site for relocation of City Fire and Police Departments	2	Site is probably appropriate only for stand-alone Public Market and amenities	1	Tremendous potential for complementary uses – museum, mixed income housing, better circulation/parking, great public amenity and outdoor recreation opportunities.	3
26	Potential for New Markets Tax Credits	Yes - Severely distressed	3	Yes - Severely distressed	3	Yes - Severely distressed	3
27	Potential Food Desert funding	6 blocks from mapped food desert	2	11 blocks from mapped food desert	1	3 Blocks from mapped food desert	3
28	Opportunity Zone	No	1	Yes	3	Maybe***	3
29	TIF District	Yes – TID 17 – Lot C Downtown	3	Yes – TID 12 – 3 Rivers Plaza District	3	Yes – TID 17 – Lot C Downtown	2
30	Proximity of nearest supermarket	Food Coop is roughly 1/3 mile away	2	Festival Foods is Across the St.	1	Festival Foods is +/- 1/3 mile	3

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

3 1	Public Transit Access	Within 1 block	3	Within 1 block	3	Within 1 block	2
3 2	Off of a major thoroughfare	4 th St. N is a major downtown thoroughfare	2	Yes – Copeland Ave	3	Yes - Copeland Ave	3
3 3	Can utilize existing infrastructure?	Yes	3	Will need new infrastructure as part of the Riverside North buildout	2	Infrastructure Unknown	3
3 4	Protect neighborhood character?	Might add to downtown congestion parking pressure	2	Will enhance Riverside North development	3	Will transform a significant City gateway	2
3 5	Potential to leverage new housing?	Minimal opportunity for new multifamily housing	1	Will be good for Riverside North housing development	2	There are several potential good multifamily housing sites on the site	3
3 6	Impact on timing for Public Market	Acquisition and environmental issues are limitations	3	Might be slow to develop along w/ Riverside North. Unwise as a stand-alone use.	1	Master Plan, Private site acquisition or cooperation needs to be negotiated. Possible environmental issues may limit development on a portion of the site.	3
3 7	Potential for evening uses?	Adjacent uses mostly will be closed in the evening, residential nearby	1	Not particularly good from Downtown. Eventually 800 housing units	1	Good. Recreational uses and other adjacencies tend to be more active.	3
3 8	Highest nearby daily vehicle count (Fm. Matthew Gallagher Eng. Dept.)	Vine – 1,000 4 th – 12,000 State – 4,000 6 th – 2,000	2	Copeland near Festival Foods – 28,000	2	3 rd St N/Copeland X La Crosse R. – 30,000 2 nd Ave. W. – 4,000	3
3 9	Impact on downtown worker lunchtime use and shopping?	Easy access for shopping after work for courthouse staff.	3	Most isolated from Downtown. At buildout, many new residents/workers	1	Once developed, good location for shopping/entertainment/recreation after work	3
4 0	Environmental issues?	Unknown	?	Unknown	?	Yes. May not build below ground on part of the site without amelioration	3

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

4 1	Conformance with City Plans	yes	3	yes	3	yes	?
4 2	Potential for positive impact on surrounding uses?	Market will improve a less attractive part of downtown	3	Market will be an important anchor and attraction for Riverside North Development but buildout will take several years.	2	Visibility of Market and Oktoberfest will be mutually beneficial	3
4 3	Negative impact potential on surroundings?	Increase traffic	2	Will help balance of development. May compete somewhat with Festival Foods	2	If Master Plan properly considers existing uses, should be positive only.	3
4 4	Traffic impacts	May increase congestion and parking demand	*	May need new signage for turn off of Copeland Ave.	*	Possible need for new circulation enhancements to be addressed in the Master Plan	*
4 5	Ease of loading, storage and other "back door" uses?	All streets surrounding the site are built out. No obvious "back door".	1	Should be no problem if site is large enough.	2	Should be no problem	*
4 6	Census tract characteristic	#55063000300 Poverty rate 26.3%, median family income 37.26% of area median, Unemployment rate 8.8%. Source ACS 2011-15	*	#55063000200 Poverty rate 26.9%, median family income 56.98% of area median, Unemployment rate 11%. Source ACS 2011-15	*	#55063000300 Poverty rate 26.3%, median family income 37.26% of area median, Unemployment rate 8.8% Source ACS 2011-15	3
4 7	Latitude: Longitude:	43.81320076048 8115 - 91.25026205300 368	*	43.82175546572222 - 91.24919999396911	*	43.818992381903165 - -91.2490675261408	*
4 8	Unique site issues	Cost of demolition will need to be factored in. Check for environmental issues.	2	Cost of adding infrastructure will need to be factored in.	2	Environmental issues from prior Xcel use. Connection to River and Riverside Park is a huge plus.	*
4 9	Recommendations if used for a Public Market	Should be advertised as part of a comprehensive	*	Will need to be marketed as part of Riverside North uses.	*	May need traffic/circulation enhancements. Needs a Master Plan. Should be	3

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

		downtown marketing strategy.				advertised as part of a comprehensive downtown marketing strategy.	
	Total Points		7 5		6 8		1 0 5

Footnotes from matrix above:

* Ratings: #1 = least desirable of the three sites, #2 = middle of the three sites, #3 = best of the three sites. No rating if sites are similar.

** These potential customer counts were derived using the population tool to be found at <http://mcdc.missouri.edu>. They assume a 9-mile radius from the individual addresses. This translates into a roughly 20-minute drive time which is approximately the distance customers will shop regularly for fresh foods at a typical Public Market.

*** There may be a process whereby Opportunity Zones can be extended where the boundary is close and the impact is within the nearby Opportunity Zone.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Three Primary Possible Sites:

The strengths and weaknesses section that follows ignores strengths or weaknesses that are common to all three sites.

Post Office Site Strengths and Weaknesses:

Strengths:

- Surrounded by many downtown retail uses.
- Possibly available at minimal cost.
- Large enough site to potentially accommodate other uses above.
- Capable of adequate parking without substantial additional uses.
- Uses associated with the nearby buildings will encourage lunchtime uses.
- Likely able to plug in to existing downtown utilities.

Weaknesses:

- Public Markets tend to do best when located on the edge of a downtown, not inside of it. There is a good reason why most supermarkets refuse to locate in a downtown area - customers shopping twice a week for fresh food do not want to navigate any downtown congestion or compete for parking.
- Poor access for “back door” uses. Public Markets generate a fair amount of truck traffic that would add to the congestion of downtown.
- Cost of demolition.
- Not especially visible from a through thoroughfare.
- Unknown environmental issues from past Post Office trucks parked at the parking lot.
- No immediately adjacent recognizable landmark. The post office may lose meaning if it is demolished and time passes.
- Most adjacent uses (bank and courthouse) – would tend to close down and discourage evening uses.
- Little leverage on creating new adjacent development opportunities. That area of downtown is mostly built out.
- No future expansion capability.
- Too close to Cameron Park for an additional Farmers Market on a site so near to the existing farmers market.

Riverside North Site Strengths and Weaknesses:

Strengths:

- Environmental abatement mostly or will be done.
- The Public Market will clearly strengthen overall Riverside North Development.
- Property is currently owned by the City's Redevelopment Authority.
- In an Opportunity Zone and Tax Incremental Financing District.
- On a major thoroughfare – Copeland Ave.

Weaknesses:

- Master Developer predicts 9 of +/- 40 developable acres may be built out by 2023, when the Public Market would hopefully be open. No existing supportive surrounding uses.
- New planned communities often lack the character that comes with historic uses and buildings.
- Across the street from Festival Foods.
- Immediate site is likely too small to accommodate recreation/entertainment/green uses. Just large enough for building and parking.
- Current adjacency next to an auto body shop is not ideal.
- Least direct benefit to existing Downtown.

Riverside Festival Site Strengths and Weaknesses:

Strengths:

- Substantially transforms an unattractive gateway to downtown.
- Located as part of a very recognizable landmark (Oktoberfest grounds).
- Existing 72-space parking already in place plus nearby City-owned parking ramp.
- Can become a major recreational asset for the city that plugs into and augments Riverside Park – trails, plaza, new amphitheater, canoe rental, bike paths, green space, and other recreational uses.
- Possible outdoor riverside amphitheater a new amenity for La Crosse.
- Public Market and recreational uses would be highly visible from the existing Copeland Ave. raised bridge.
- Population entering downtown tends to be more concentrated from the North, making Riverside Festival Site a principle gateway for residents as well as visitors arriving from Interstate 90.
- Will catalyze significant nearby development – many underdeveloped sites close by.
- Many strongly compatible nearby uses such as hotels, restaurants and park.
- Off of a major through thoroughfare – Copeland Ave.
- Strong opportunity for both midday and evening uses.
- Least expensive option for creating necessary parking.
- Possibly rationalizes traffic flow in that part of town.
- Opportunity for new mixed-income housing.
- Can be both an urban activity attraction and recreational haven at the same time.

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

- Higher visibility (from elevated bridge) and somewhat higher traffic counts.

Weaknesses:

- Issues with transfer from Northern States Power and private owners need to be resolved.
- Need for a Phase I and possible Phase II environmental study and possible partial amelioration may need to be done.
- Need to develop a new Master Development Plan which will determine possible new circulation and site components. This may slow down development somewhat.
- Need to test if sound mitigation from Copeland bridge is an issue.
- Need to bring private owners/users on board with Master Planning process.

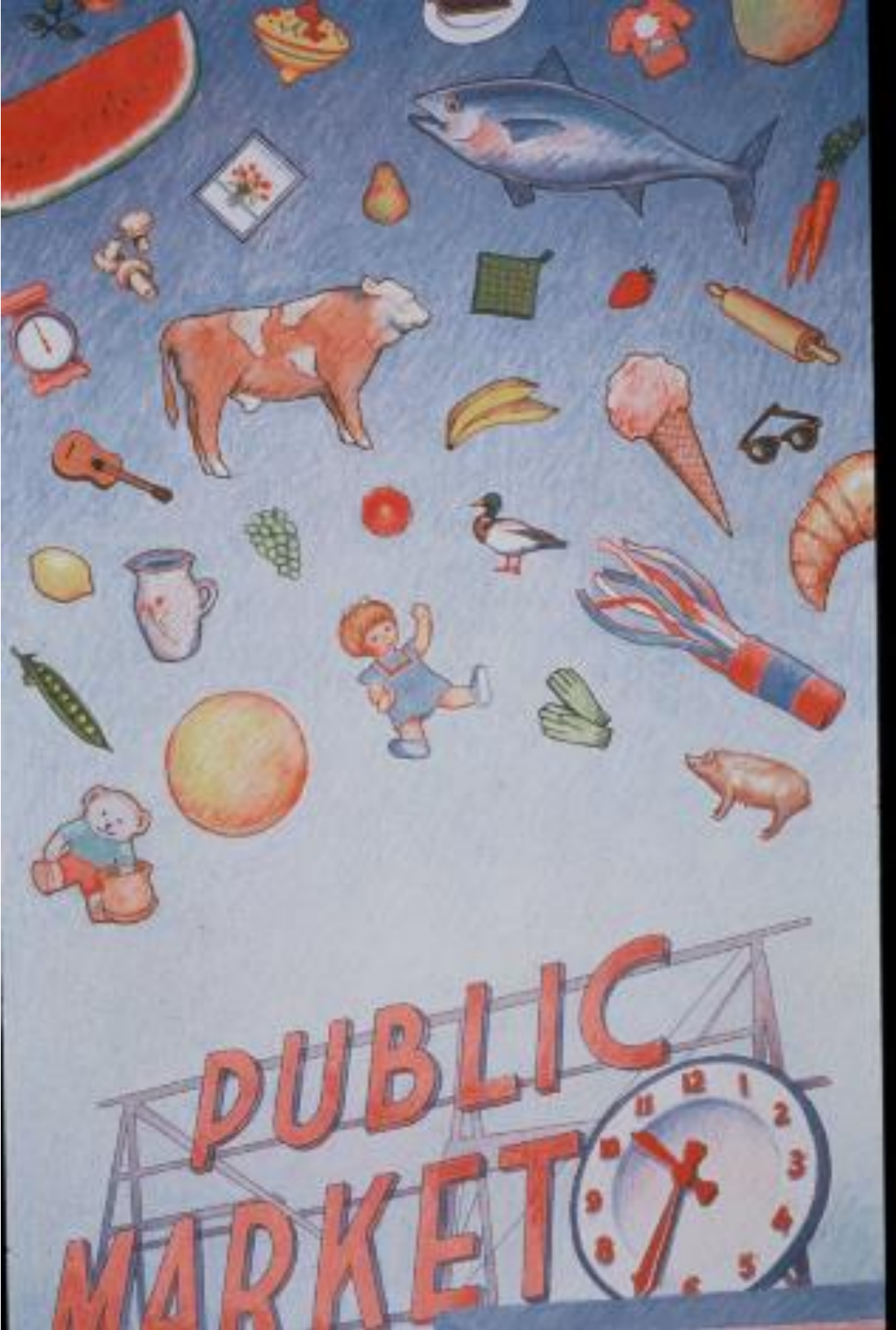
Recommended Site

The Riverside Festival Site is clearly the best site to locate the La Crosse Public Market.

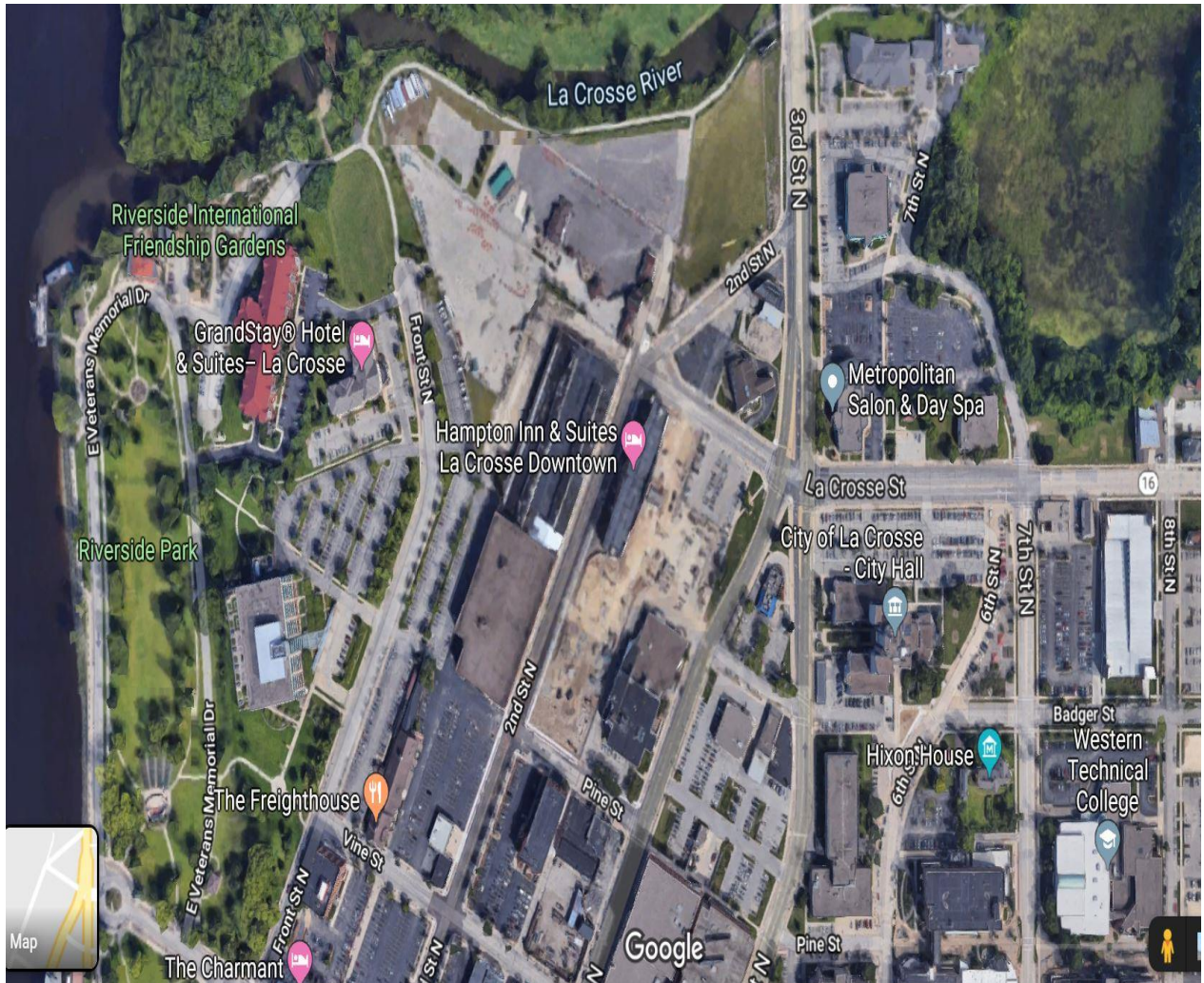
The author of this study has done over a dozen site analyses on a variety of potential Public Market sites in many different cities. Never has one site emerged so strongly as the best site. The site, by far, has the strongest advantages and the fewest detriments. While clearly any environmental issues need to be affirmatively addressed; this may well also be true at the other two sites. It is quite common when building in an urban environment to have to study and often mitigate environmental issues.

The numerical scoring for the Riverside Festival Site is substantially higher (105 vs. 75 and 68) than the other sites, despite the fact that the weighted criteria are not necessarily of equal importance. The reality is that in the vast preponderance of evaluative criteria, the recommended site scored higher than the other two options.

It is important to convene all of the existing property owners to participate in the development of a Master Development Plan. The City should participate in this planning effort. The use for Oktoberfest and other festivals needs to be enhanced not sacrificed.

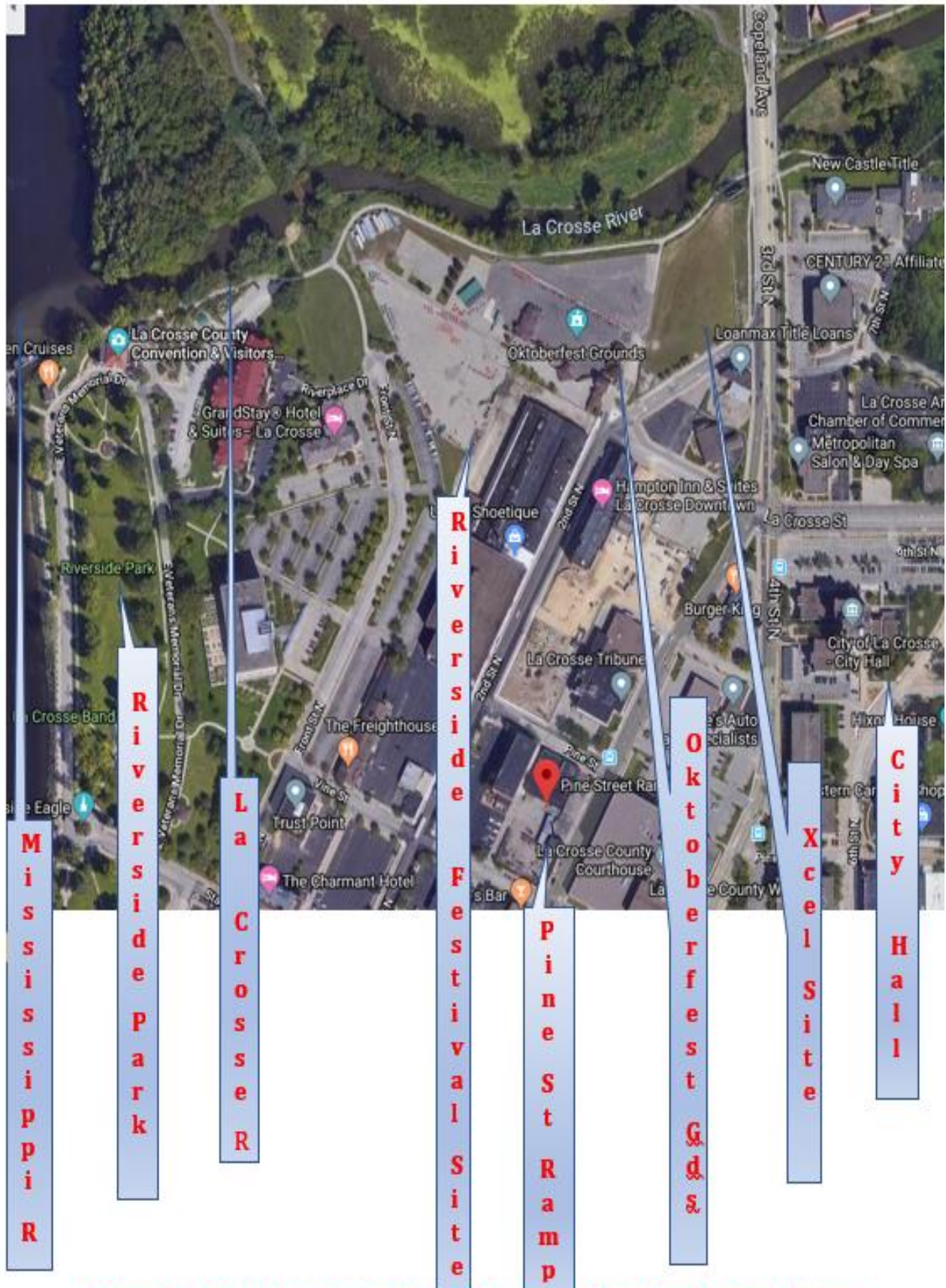


Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market



Riverside Festival Site Associated Existing Uses

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market



Riverside Festival Site Vicinity (see P. 12 & 13 for boundaries in Blue)

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market



Area Floodplain Map Showing Minimum Floodplain Areas



View from the old La Crosse RR/Pedestrian Bridge over the La Crosse River

Suggested Mitigations for Weaknesses in The Recommended Site

Planning: It is suggested that the City of La Crosse create a Master Development Plan for the entire site. All principals, including representatives of Xcel and other property owners within the site, a representative of the Oktoberfest Board, a representative from Downtown Mainstreet, Inc. and a representative associated with the development of the Public Market should be represented in a Plan Advisory Committee that should be formed. The focus of the planning effort should be on how to enhance the existing festival uses, accommodate the new Public Market and parking uses, accommodate new public amenities and recreational enhancements, improve circulation on the site, improve the image of La Crosse at a critical gateway, and add other needed amenities to benefit the community.



Dated Oktoberfest Structures Need to be Improved and/or Relocated on the Site

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

Environmental Issues: It is suggested that the City of La Crosse have a Phase I Environmental Report for the entire recommended site. Assuming that clean-up/mitigations are not prohibitively expensive, a Phase II report should be commissioned and the City should, if possible, acquire the property from Northern States Power. The City may need to take on all future environmental liabilities in regards to the site. Environmental reports should be completed prior to acquisition. The utilities that cross the property should be mapped and considered in locating future uses.



Xcel Portion of the Site

Noise issues from Copeland Ave. bridge: This may or not be an issue. If it is determined that mitigations are necessary, the Public Market Building might be located such that the side

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

facing Copeland is used for “back door” uses such as loading and garbage. The Public Market building will be at least two stories and could be used to buffer the sounds from the bridge.

Billboard: A billboard is located at the north end of the overall Xcel portion of the site. Ownership of the rights to the billboard and length of the lease needs to be determined. If necessary, the remaining leasehold rights for this billboard needs to be determined and the lease needs to be bought out and the billboards removed.



Other structures: There is fencing on the site that should be removed. Any existing structures that are not part of the Master Plan need to be identified and potentially removed.



Omit Most Existing Fences

Electrical transformers at the site: These should be walled off and screened or consolidated/reduced in size.

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market



Electrical Transformer at the Edge of the Site.

Access: Currently, access to the site may be had by turning west off of Copeland Ave. onto 4th St. and then turning right onto Oktoberfest Strasse. This is a bit circuitous. Serious consideration should be given to creating new circulation patterns as part of the Master Plan for the site. This should facilitate customer access to the interior site elements including the Oktoberfest grounds, the Market’s surface parking lots as well as delivery and garbage truck circulation from and to the “back door” of the site.

Next Steps

- 1) The City should assemble an Advisory Committee to work with an experienced team of planning, architectural, and Public Market consultants to develop a comprehensive Master Development Plan for the Riverside Festival site. Participants should include members identified above (in the “Mitigations” section), as well as other key community representatives. A new Master Plan should consider new circulation elements both within and through the site. These might include new street extensions, traffic circles, lights, or turn signals.
- 2) Once the Master Plan is completed and adopted by the City Council, the Advisory Committee should be retained and expanded to include members of La Crosse’s neighborhoods, business and downtown community, minority communities, a real estate representative, and education and health entities. This new Advisory Committee should

Site Analysis for Locating the La Crosse Public Market

work with the City to oversee the implementation of the Master Plan and the development of the Public Market.

- 3) A stand-alone “La Crosse Public Market” website should be created that links to the prior Feasibility Study as well as this Site Analysis. The City’s existing website should link to this new website. Regular updates from the planning efforts should be posted. Interactive tools to allow for citizen input and reaction should be included. Forms should be developed and posted that allow citizens to sign up as volunteers, express interest in opening a Public Market business, make donations, provide suggestions and reactions to the planning efforts.
- 4) A Phase I environmental study of the site and, if appropriate, a Phase II remediation plan should be implemented. It is possible that elements of the site need not be remediated, if they are to be used for uses such as parking where the soil will be capped and excavation is unnecessary.
- 5) The draft ‘Mission and Goals’ presented in the Feasibility Study should be evaluated, revised, and eventually adopted by the City Council. It should ultimately be used as part of a lease to a new nonprofit management Board to be constituted to eventually set policy for and manage the Public Market. The City should retain control over the development process during the preopening phase of the Market’s creation. A specific Management Plan will be suggested in the forthcoming Business Plan.
- 6) Following any necessary revisions, the City Council should adopt this Study and formally commit to supporting the development of the La Crosse Public Market.

Conclusion

La Crosse is ripe for the Public Market and the Riverside Festival grounds is the right place to locate it.

By transforming the gateway to La Crosse, modernizing the Oktoberfest grounds, adding various recreational amenities, creating new opportunities, and developing a new gathering and shopping place for all area citizens, the La Crosse Public Market and the new Riverside Festival grounds will be transformative for La Crosse. This is an exciting but complex and challenging project. Efforts should be made to involve the citizens of La Crosse as well as the principals from major community institutions in the Public Market’s development.

This development effort has many disparate elements that need to come together in a coordinated, intentional, and thoughtful manner to create a successful outcome. La Crosse is up to the task.



Disparate Elements Create a Whole