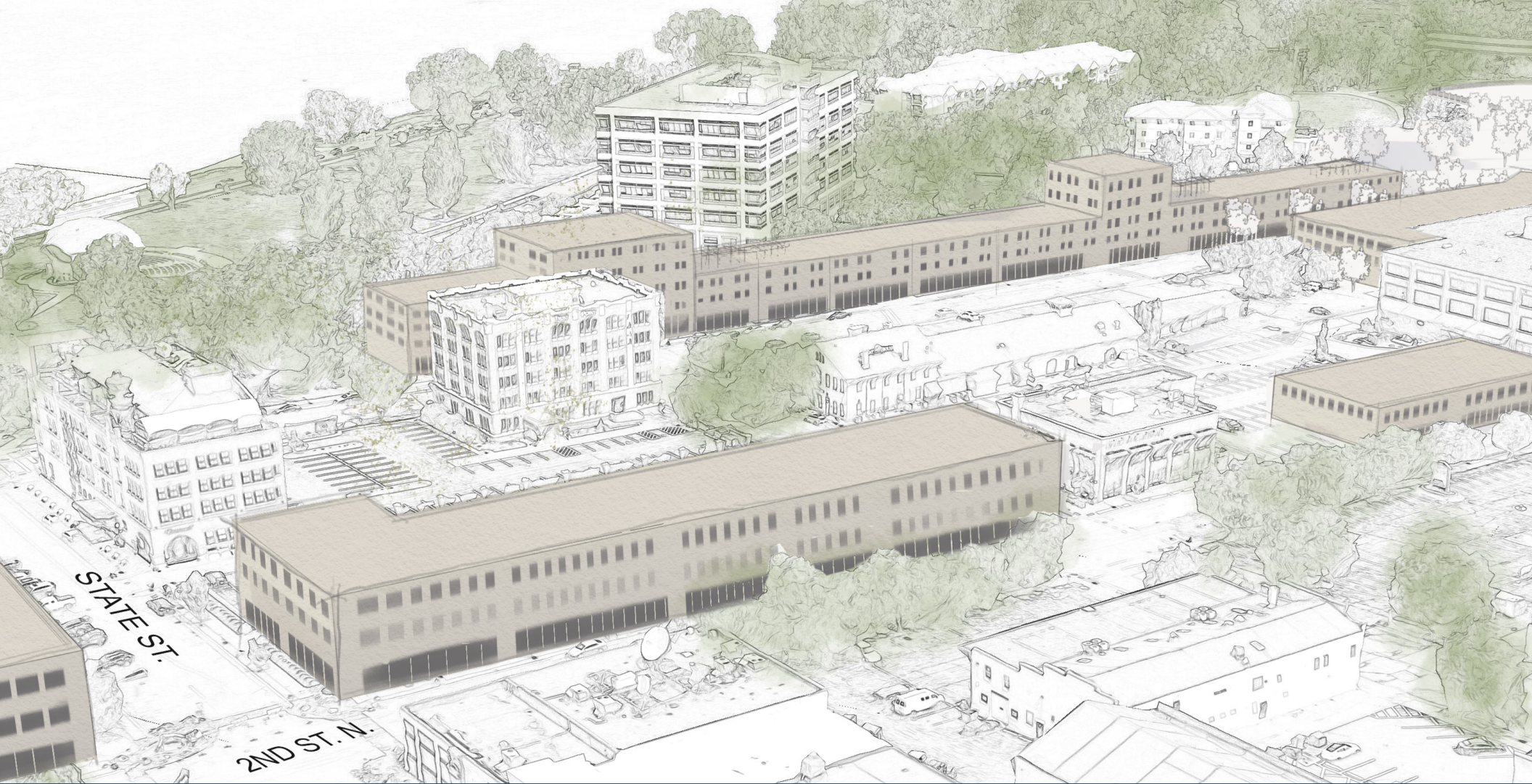




**FINAL DRAFT
OCTOBER 8, 2025**

Downtown La Crosse River Area

Inventory and Redevelopment Plan

Acknowledgments

City of La Crosse Mayor and Council

City of La Crosse Staff

Tim Acklin, AICP, Deputy Director of Planning and Development
Julie Emslie, Economic Development Administrator
Andrea Trane, Director of Planning and Development

Consultant Team

Studio GWA

Ashley Sarver, AICP
Aaron Holverson, AIA
Michael Smith

Redevelopment Resources

Kristen Fish-Peterson, CEcD, EDFP
Dayna Sarver, CEcD, HDFP



REDEVELOPMENT
RESOURCES

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The content within this document is for informational purposes only and should not be used for final design, engineering, surveying, or construction purposes. All content including but not limited to existing conditions, analysis, findings, recommendations, and strategies is based on limited information collected during the planning process and is subject to change. Further analysis is necessary prior to implementing any of the recommendations contained herein.

Introduction

Project Overview and Purpose

Downtown La Crosse is a vibrant and productive district, with culture and character befitting a historic urban core for which it is well-known. The district is characterized by a compact, walkable environment, with recreational amenities in close proximity and an increasing amount of mixed-use developments offering new multifamily residences. Downtown serves as a hub of employment and commercial activity, not only for the city itself but also for the region.

Traditionally, the downtown boundaries have included the boundaries of the Downtown La Crosse Historic District as well as blocks to the south and east. The Imagine 2040 La Crosse Downtown Plan expands the boundaries of downtown to include not only adjacent residential districts but also the area of focus within this plan: The ‘La Crosse River Area’, which is northwest of downtown and next to the confluence of the La Crosse River and Mississippi River.

The purpose of the Downtown La Crosse River Area Inventory and Redevelopment Plan is twofold:



Create a targeted yet integrated plan: Provide an intentional, holistic approach to redevelopment within the study area, all while ensuring the site remains relevant and connected to downtown and other nearby destinations.

Engage multiple stakeholders around a vision for redevelopment: Create a plan that is shaped by the input of existing property owners and business owners, all while producing a final product that can be marketed to developers.

Despite its proximity to the downtown core, previous plans as well as stakeholders have described the study area as being separated or disconnected from downtown. This sentiment notwithstanding, the study area is a hub of activity in its own right. Recent investments including multifamily residential developments along with longstanding events like Oktoberfest contribute to the study area being a regional destination.

In the effort to create an integrated and cohesive downtown, this plan is outlined under the following tasks:

- Reviewing existing, adopted plans and studies to ensure the plan remains cohesive and well-aligned;
- Analyzing the latest public and proprietary data to understand industry and employment trends;
- Documenting the existing conditions of the built environment;
- Assessing redevelopment potential on parcels and properties;
- Illustrating scenarios of concept developments and site improvements;
- Identifying compatible, viable commercial uses based on consumer data;
- Improving access for people walking in and around the study area; and
- Detailing a work plan of tasks, in order of priority, to execute over the next 5-10 years.

The plan was produced between August 2024 and October 2025 with oversight from the City of La Crosse Department of Planning and Development. Funding for the plan was approved in the 2021 Capital Improvement Program budget for \$50,000 from Tax Incremental District 17.

Plan Study Area

The study boundary for the plan consists of the La Crosse River to the north, Riverside Park to the west, and 2nd Street N and 3rd St N (US-53) to the east, while extending a half block south of State Street. This is an approximately 46.5 acre area that encompasses the northwest section of downtown La Crosse.

Figure 1: Plan Study Area



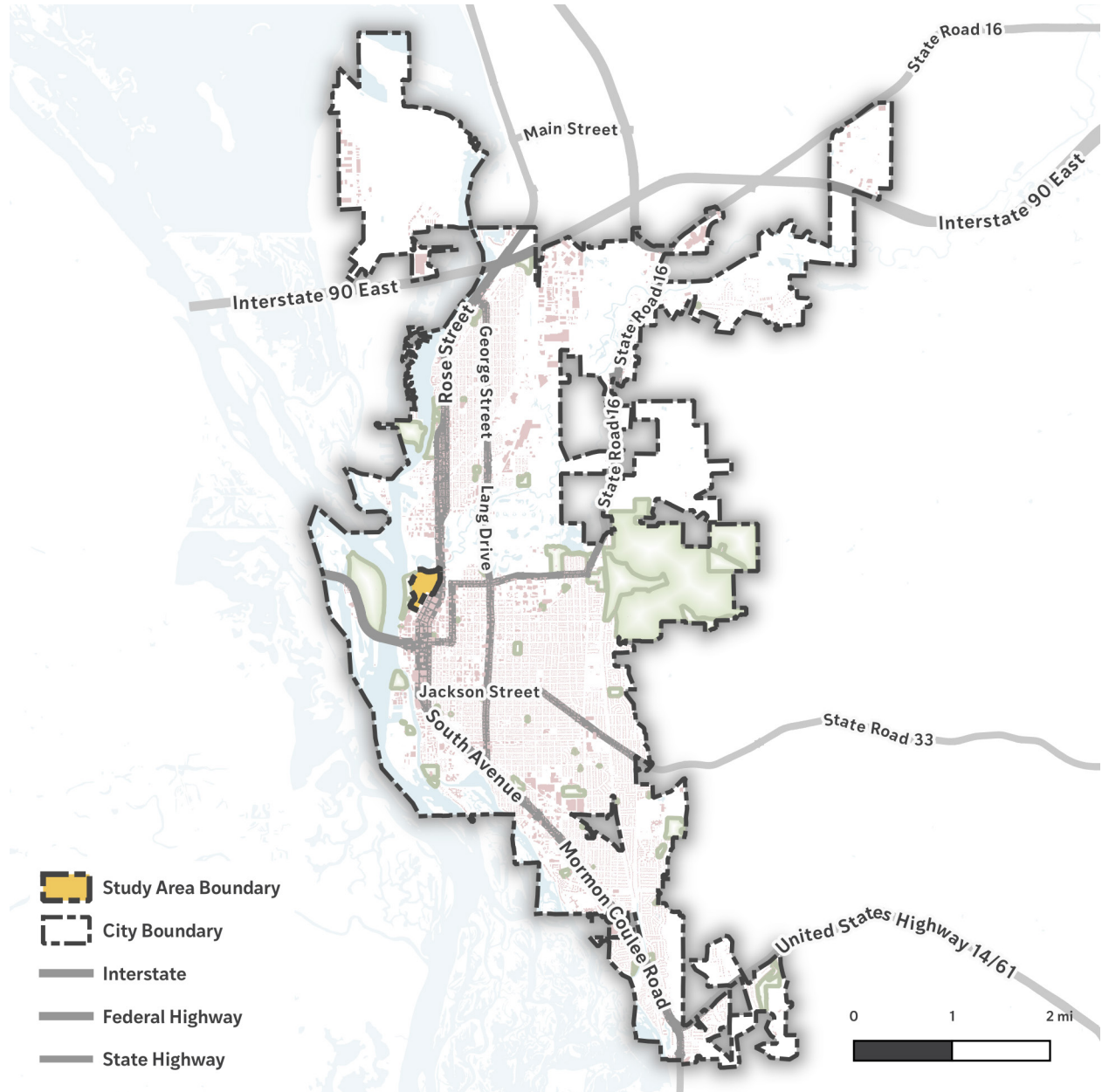
City Context

The City of La Crosse is located at the confluence of the Black and Mississippi rivers in La Crosse County. La Crosse's population was 52,680 as of the 2020 Census.

La Crosse's economy serves as a regional educational, medical, manufacturing, and transportation hub for Western Wisconsin producing a Gross Domestic Product of \$9.7 billion as of 2022. The city is a college town with nearly 20,000 students and is home to the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Technical College.

The La Crosse area is home to the headquarters or regional offices of Kwik Trip, Organic Valley, Mayo Clinic, Emplify Health (formerly Gundersen Health System), City Brewing Company, and Trane. La Crosse County is a top ten tourist destination in the state with \$433 million in travel-related spending generated in 2023. Its river access and plethora of outdoor recreational opportunities make it a hub for activity.

Figure 2: City of La Crosse Municipal Boundary and Study Area



Previous Plans, Studies, Reports

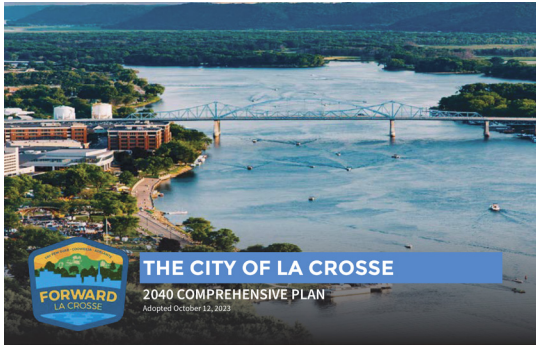
This section incorporates a select set of adopted plans, studies, and reports to ensure the City's planning efforts remain both continuous and complementary.

A total of 29 plans were reviewed; of those 29, 12 plans were explicitly summarized for the sake of this plan, with applicable guidance and redevelopment implications as appropriate. Table 1 includes a list of both City-wide plans and plans that are specific to downtown and/or the study area.

Table 1: List of City-Wide and Study Area Specific Plans Reviewed. Plans summarized in this report are in **bold**.

General, City-Wide Plans		Downtown and Study Area Specific Plans	
City Vision 2020 Master Plan (2004)	City of La Crosse Transportation Demand Management Plan (2018)	Imagine 2040 La Crosse Downtown Plan (2021)	Downtown Retail Market Analysis (2017)
City Vision 2000 Master Plan Update (1996, 1999)	Downtown Neighborhood Association Action Plan	Riverside North Charrette Master Plan Report (2014)	Downtown Commercial Historic District Heritage Preservation Plan (2004)
Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan (2002)	City Of La Crosse Climate Action Plan (2020)	Project Plans and Amendments for Tax Incremental Districts 11, 12, 17, and 18	Various Plans of Downtown Main Street, Inc.
The City Of La Crosse, Wisconsin Parking Study (1997, 2011, 2014)	Downtown Parking Study Update & Analysis of Expanded Areas (2020)	Downtown Historic District Design Standards (2016)	Conditions Assessment Report, Wisconsin Railway Light & Power Building (2020)
City Of La Crosse Arts Board Strategic Plan (2013)	Forward La Crosse, 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update (2023)	City of La Crosse Public Market Feasibility Study (2019)	La Crosse County Historical Society Business Plan (2022)
Bicycle And Pedestrian Master Plan (2012)	La Crosse Housing Study (2024)	City of La Crosse Public Market Site Analysis (2020)	Discovery Campus Overview (2023)
La Crosse Sustainability Plan (2009)	Us 53 & Us 14/61 Corridor Study (2024)	City of La Crosse Public Market Partial Business Plan (2021)	La Crosse Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update (2024)
Port Of La Crosse Harbor And Waterfront Plan (2011)			

Forward La Crosse: The City of La Crosse 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2023)



Forward La Crosse provides a guiding vision and policy framework for the City's land use, future planning, and community decisions over a 20-year period. The plan, which was adopted in October 2023, was shaped by an extensive community engagement process. This resulted in a plan that is not only a more streamlined, user-friendly update to the previously adopted 2002 Comprehensive Plan but also aligns more closely with the aspirations and priorities of a wide range of community members: residents, business owners, and more.

The plan is organized into six sections, each of which subsumes plan elements required by state statute:

- **Process and Engagement:** Details the planning process in general, and the public engagement strategy in particular;
- **Growth & Land Use:** Includes the Land Use Framework and Land Use Categories;
- **A Place to Call Home:** Includes the Housing elements as well as Heritage Preservation and Cultural Stewardship;

- **A Place to Prosper:** Includes the Economic Development and Transportation elements;
- **A Place to Admire:** Includes the Natural Resources and Resilience element;
- **A Place for the Long Term:** Includes the Utilities & Community Facilities and Intergovernmental Cooperation elements.

Notably, the 'Growth & Land Use' section utilizes the 'NDC' model (short for Neighborhoods, Districts, and Corridors) which assigns all land uses in the City with a Desirable, Allowable, or Undesirable designation. The study area in this particular report is noted in the Comprehensive Plan as being within the Downtown District, and uses determined to be desirable include High-Intensity Residential, High-Intensity Mixed-Use, Commercial, and Parks & Open Space.

The plan concludes with a 'Next Steps' section, which provides an implementation strategy and a framework for tracking plan performance and future plan updates.

Applicable Concepts & Guidelines

- **Mixed-use urban center:** The 'Growth and Land Use' section is apt to reference the *Imagine 2040 La Crosse Downtown Plan*, specifically to create a downtown that weaves commercial and residential uses together. This would result in a downtown that feels like a neighborhood in its own right while being interconnected to the adjacent neighborhoods.
- **Multimodal access:** The plan focuses on improving transportation networks, which includes expanding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. This is especially relevant to the study area given its proximity to existing paths and trails.

- **Housing diversity through infill development:** The housing section ('A Place to Call Home') recommends the development of 'missing middle' housing. While this recommendation applies primarily to existing neighborhoods throughout the City, the plan also recommends prioritizing housing near transportation and commercial corridors as well as in underutilized areas, such as surface parking lots or vacant office space.

Implications for Redevelopment

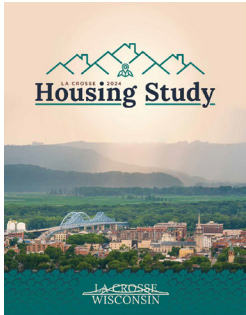
Desirable uses: In accordance with the designations of the 'NDC' model described above, future land use includes high-intensity mixed-use and commercial developments as being the most desirable within the study area. Additionally, the plan mentions Sec. 115-390(1) of the City's Zoning Code, which requires that all buildings in the downtown be a minimum of two stories tall.

La Crosse Housing Study (2024)

The *La Crosse 2024 Housing Study* is a resource for City staff, economic development professionals, real estate developers, and other entities seeking to understand the opportunities and issues related

According to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the study area falls within the boundaries of the 'Downtown District'. The most desirable uses within this district include High-Intensity Residential, High-Intensity Mixed-Use, Commercial, and Parks & Open Space.

to housing in the city. The study details a number of ongoing challenges in the local housing market including aging building stock, housing affordability, high development costs, and market uncertainty in general, and states that many of these issues were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.



The study is a supplement to other recently adopted plans including the 2020 *Climate Action Plan*, the 2024 – *Pathways Home: A Plan to End Homelessness in La Crosse* report, and the *La Crosse 2040 Comprehensive Plan*. The first three goals

in the housing study are from the Comprehensive Plan and form the basis for the study's policies and approaches. The study outlines additional goals that emerged through community engagement and market analysis; this includes:

- Make building procedures and approvals in La Crosse a clear, predictable, and flexible process;
- Secure and conserve existing housing; and
- Improve tenant and landlord relationships.

The report proposes various policy approaches to address these goals, such as leveraging public-private partnerships, promoting innovative housing production methods, and prioritizing underutilized sites through infill redevelopment. Downtown La Crosse is identified as its own Policy Area in the study, and the boundaries of downtown include the study area of this plan. In keeping with the recommendations of the *La Crosse 2040 Comprehensive Plan* and the *Imagine 2040 La Crosse Downtown Plan*, the study includes that mixed-use developments that incorporate 'missing middle' housing is desirable for the study area.

Applicable Concepts & Guidelines

- **Incorporating housing into the study area:** In the Downtown Policy Area, the Land Use Vision Summary includes focusing on medium- and high-density housing arrangements that leverage proximity to downtown.
- **Prioritizing underutilized sites:** One of the actions under Goal 2 ('Foster greater housing diversity through strategic infill development') includes prioritizing the redevelopment of underutilized sites, such as surface parking lots, into mixed-use developments with a housing component.

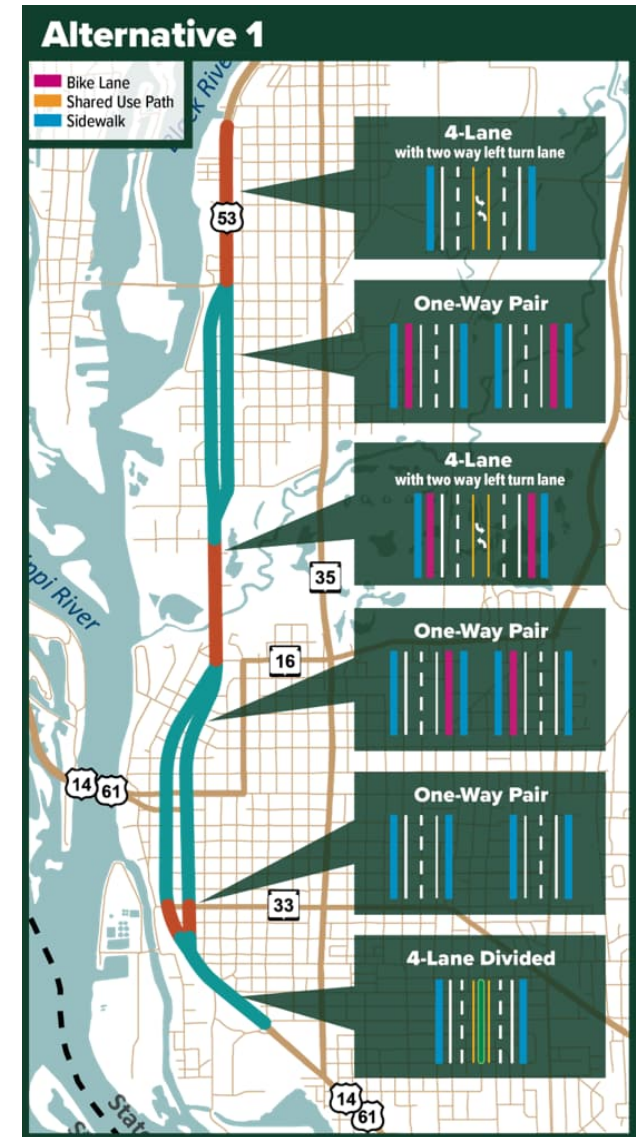
Implications for Redevelopment

- **Existing zoning:** Multi-family and mixed-use developments are permitted by right within the study area.

US 53 & US 14/61 Corridor Study (2024)

In 2023 the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) initiated a corridor study for US 53 and US 14/61. According to WisDOT, the purpose of the corridor study is to develop alternatives that improve safety and address traffic operations concerns where practicable, while addressing existing and projected infrastructure needs through the design year (2050). The study limits include US 53 and US 14/61 (3rd, 4th, Copeland Avenue, Rose Street) from WIS 35 (West Avenue) to I-90.

Figure 3: Excerpt from Draft WisDOT US 53 & US 14/61 Corridor Study, Alternative 1 Concept. Source: WisDOT



The corridor study includes four preliminary alternatives which are tailored to their specific road segment. There are two US 53 segments relevant to the study area—King Street to 2nd Street, and 2nd Street to Causeway Boulevard—and the alternatives specific to each segment are as follows:

King Street to 2nd Street:

- **Alternative 1:** Adding protected bike lanes to the left side of the street;
- **Alternative 2:** Adding a sidewalk-level cycle track on northbound US 53;
- **Alternative 3:** Adding a parking-protected bike lane; and
- **Alternative 4:** Widening the sidewalks and narrowing the parking (this alternative does not include bike lanes).

2nd Street to Causeway Boulevard: All four alternatives propose reducing the width of travel lanes and adding sidewalk-level bike lanes.

It is important to note that this is an active study at the time of this report. No preferred alternatives have been selected, and each alternative is subject to change. The corridor study as well as an environmental study are scheduled to be completed in 2025.

Applicable Concepts & Guidelines

- **Improving bike-ped connectivity:** The addition of bike lanes along US 53 would connect existing gaps in the bicycle network. Visitors to the study area (Oktoberfest attendees, for example) could park further away and use bike-share to reach their destination.

Implications for Redevelopment

- **La Crosse Street intersection:** The corridor study notes that existing queues and high crash frequencies as well as future traffic demand warrant improvements to the intersection of La Crosse Street and US 53. The study considers two options: Adding left-hand turn lanes or constructing a roundabout. Both options have right of way constraints which may result in property acquisitions.

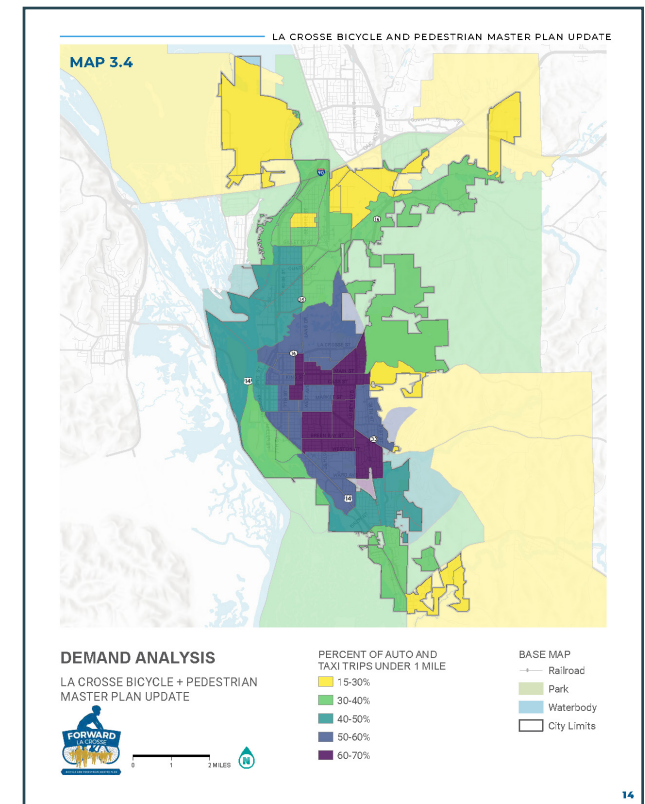
La Crosse Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update (2024)

The La Crosse Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan aims to enhance bicycle and pedestrian transportation infrastructure and education across the city. The study primarily builds upon the 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan with advances in programming, inclusivity, and safety. Further, it addresses existing bicycle and pedestrian conditions and offers recommendations for network improvements in the near-term to ensure continuing action.

Applicable Concepts & Guidelines

- **Improving bike-ped safety:** The plan illustrates the prevalence of walking and biking barriers within the study area, which are based on stakeholder input. This includes crossing barriers on US-53 by La Crosse Street, which is a key gateway into the study area. Further, the report notes high-injury segments of the road network where fatal crashes or serious injuries have occurred, including US 53, 2nd Street, and La Crosse Street.

Figure 4: Excerpt from 2024 La Crosse Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update. Source: City of La Crosse



- **Network-wide and spot improvements:** The plan recommends both spot improvements and network-wide improvements. Facility types such as new greenways, separated bike facilities, and multi-use trails offer low-stress routes that cater to all ages and abilities.
- **Encouraging more walking and biking trips:** 50-60 percent of automotive trips around the study area are one mile or less, which presents an opportunity to replace a portion of those trips with walking and biking trips. Converting automobile usage

to walking and biking trips to prioritize biked use could improve High Injury Network segments within the study area, such as US 53, 2nd Street, and La Crosse Street.

Implications for the Study Area

- **Spot improvements:** The plan proposes extending an existing separated facility through Vine Street and an existing trail through Pine Street. The US-53 Corridor Study (described above, and considered active at the time of this report) may include a separated facility as part of their preferred alternative.

Imagine 2040 La Crosse Downtown Plan (2021)



The *Imagine 2040 La Crosse Downtown Plan* is both an aspirational and practical document, one that envisions a vibrant and inclusive downtown while being grounded in actions that are feasible and realistic. The plan is an update to the previous *City Vision 2020* downtown plan, with key distinctions being an expansion of the plan boundaries to include adjacent residential neighborhoods (based on the assumption that downtown depends on these neighborhoods) and the inclusion of diverse, non-traditional public engagement methods

(based out of necessity for public health due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

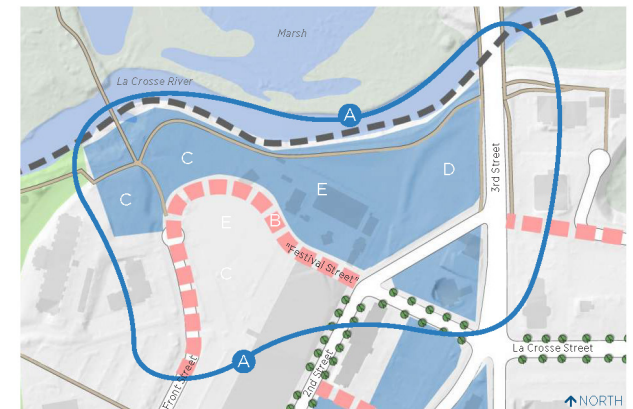
The plan is organized around five themes:

- **Market for Development:** Envisioning downtown as a premier place for economic development, one that uses strategic development and infill to maximize the potential of each site;
- **Network of Strong Neighborhoods:** Envisioning downtown as a tapestry of neighborhoods interwoven with the urban core, with both existing and proposed neighborhoods supportive diverse and affordable housing types;
- **Connected City:** Envisioning downtown having strong connections to nearby neighborhoods and recreational destinations while improving accessibility and mobility for all people;
- **Destination for All People:** Envisioning a downtown that is welcoming for both current and future patrons—residents, employees, students, and tourists; and
- **Confluence of Nature:** A downtown that celebrates and values the outdoors while giving everyone the opportunity to access nature.

Each theme includes its own respective vision statement, illustrative concepts, and opportunities for actions to support the vision.

A key initiative in the *Imagine 2040* plan includes the redevelopment of opportunity sites. This includes the 'La Crosse River Area' which is the focus of this particular study. The downtown plan outlines site-specific improvements that could be made to this area, including the extension of the street grid, the creation of a festival street, and the

Figure 5: Excerpt from 2040 La Crosse Downtown Plan, 'La Crosse River Area' Opportunity Site. Source: City of La Crosse



possible development of a public market.

Applicable Concepts & Guidelines

- **Relationship to downtown:** While the study area is technically considered 'downtown', and is within the updated study boundaries, the *Imagine 2040* plan mentions that the study area is "separated" from the rest of downtown.
- **Surface parking:** The report states that surface parking lots could be decommissioned and redeveloped into a vertical mixed use.
- **Connecting destinations to amenities:** The plan mentions that new developments and capital improvements can improve accessibility in a variety of ways, from vendor staging to trail connectivity and more.

Implications for Redevelopment

- **Mixed-use development:** While market conditions are ever-changing, the report

highlight mixed-use developments that have occurred within or nearby the study area, including Landmark by the Rivers, which can inform redevelopment prospects.

- **Public market location:** The *Imagine 2040* plan reinforces the 3rd Street landing (a vacant lot which is currently owned by Xcel Energy) as a prime location for the public market due not only to its ability to become a “gateway to all of downtown” but also to its programming potential with Oktoberfest.
- **Front/La Crosse Street connection:** The creation of a festival street by means of connecting Front Street and La Crosse Street presents both an opportunity and a challenge, one that requires coordination between the City of La Crosse, Oktoberfest, and the property owners. City staff may need to balance the competing aims of creating year-round accessibility with Oktoberfest-specific programming.

Downtown Parking Study Update (2020)

In 2020, the City of La Crosse commissioned a parking study to evaluate the parking supply and demand in the downtown district and adjacent neighborhoods. The study area boundaries for the report are primarily within the Downtown District, which consists of Cass Street, La Crosse Street, 7th Street, and the Mississippi River.

The report details both public and private parking spaces downtown. Of the approximately 9,129 parking spaces downtown, 52 percent is public (4,755 spaces) which, according to the study, exceeds the 50 percent standard for public parking supply within a downtown area. The study

Figure 6: Excerpt from 2020 Downtown Parking Study Update, 10-Year Forecasted Surplus/Deficit. Green and blue indicate a surplus; yellow and red indicate a deficit. Source: City of La Crosse



also includes a parking utilization analysis which quantifies usage by parking type, duration, and block. The supply and utilization findings inform the future conditions section, which includes both five- and ten-year scenarios of anticipated occupancy.

Applicable Concepts & Guidelines

- **Dated, but applicable, documents:** The Parking Study includes data from 2014 and 2020. While some of the data is out of date, most of the questions remain applicable, and the narrative alongside each question

and recommendation are still relevant.

- **Improving economic connectivity:** The plan states that connecting parking to existing and proposed retail spaces with ease of access and close proximity could limit vehicle relocation while promoting bicycle and pedestrian traffic through the downtown area.
- **Key Recommendations:** Proposals to improve downtown area parking include the expansion of residential parking permit areas, the expansion and promotion of cycling, paid on-street parking, the annual review of on-street parking conditions, and the limiting of on-street parking within downtown boundaries to two hours with no re-parking.

Implications for Redevelopment

- **Downtown Area Development:** The study reflects the economic importance of parking to the City of La Crosse. Data within details adequate parking availability for future commercial expansion in the downtown area. Limiting parking development in the area ensures bike-ped facility growth and further commercial and mixed-use square footage.

City of La Crosse Public Market Plans and Studies (2019-2021)

From 2019 to 2021, the City of La Crosse commissioned three reports concerning a prospective public market. The first was a feasibility study (2019) which determined that a public market would indeed be viable. Following

this study was a site analysis (2020) and a partial business plan (2021). A summary of each is below.

City of La Crosse Public Market Feasibility Study (2019).

This report examines the feasibility of establishing a Public Market in La Crosse. The report begins by describing the concept of a public market and studying precedents of other public markets, with observations and recommendations that apply specifically to La Crosse in general and the downtown in particular. The report then details how to establish and maintain a healthy and vibrant market environment. Following an examination of 18 separate non-economic, non-demographic criteria that are critical to establishing a successful public market, the report examines economic and demographic details, growth trends, and complementary and competitive uses. The report outlines where the customers, vendors and farmers will come from. Supply and demand statistics are presented and recommendations are made regarding how the public market can be supportive to its surrounding communities.

The report concludes that a public market would be indeed feasible and states that such a market would be transformational to the community and the larger region. The report includes basic criteria about the building's size and location—it should be a roughly 30,000-35,000 square foot building, located downtown—but mentions that additional information should be detailed in a forthcoming market site analysis.

City of La Crosse Public Market Site Analysis (2020).

The purpose of this report is to guide city officials in selecting a preferred location for a public market. The authors begin with a list of general criteria

Figure 7: Excerpt from La Crosse Public Market Business Plan, Aerial of 'Riverside Festival' Site. Source: City of La Crosse



which are instrumental in site selection; this includes complementary neighbors, proximity to existing and successful events, and high visibility. After evaluating 15 sites throughout the city, three sites were reviewed for final comparative analysis: 'Riverside North' (north of the study area), 'Post Office' (south of the study area), and 'Riverside Festival' (within the study area). The report runs each of the three sites through a matrix that includes nearly 50 variables for additional analysis. Ultimately, the report recommends the 'Riverside

Festival' site as the best location.

The Riverside Festival site, which is located largely on the current Oktoberfest grounds, is desirable not only because of its visibility and proximity to US 53 but also because of its ability to serve as a gateway into downtown. The report lists a number of strengths associated with the Riverside Festival site, including:

- Ample space for versatile programming, parking, and future expansion;

- Compatibility with nearby recreational and festival uses;
- Its ability to accommodate complementary uses such as housing and public events; and
- Its potential to catalyze further development in the area.

The analysis emphasizes the need for collaboration among property owners, city officials, and other stakeholders to ensure that the market is successful. The 'Next Steps' section of the report includes creating a Master Development Plan and creating an advisory committee, among other tasks.

City of La Crosse Public Market Partial Business Plan (2021).

This report details the fundamental components of a business plan for a potential public market. This includes a design program with conceptual site plan layouts and renderings for the 'Riverside Festival' site in general and the public market building in particular. While these concepts include a high-level summary of capital costs, the report recommends the creation of a comprehensive Master Plan for the site, which would include a detailed site map, environmental reports, and other critical information.

The report states that a public market and associated plaza will cost approximately \$15.5 million to develop, generate \$1.2 million in annual revenues, and assumes a year 4 breakeven budget at 'full' (95%) occupancy. It proposes the creation of a comprehensive funding plan with multiple funding sources to cover capital and operating costs. The report also presents a plan for developing and managing the public market, including a board composition, management entity, and suggested staff positions with job descriptions and salaries.

The report concludes with a timeline of the steps

needed to finalize planning, design, construction, tenant lease-up, and fundraising over a three-year period (2021-2023). While this timeline has expired, the next steps generally remain applicable

Applicable Concepts & Guidelines

- **Dated, but applicable, documents:** The Feasibility Study includes 18 'Relevant Factors', which phrased as questions in the report. While some of the data is out of date, many of the questions remain applicable, and the narrative alongside each question is still relevant.
- **Viability of the Riverside Festival site:** The Site Analysis lists 14 high-level site selection criteria at the beginning of the report. The 'Riverside Festival' site meets multiple criteria, including siting on the "outside perimeter near downtown", space to accommodate public amenities and events, and space for future development.

Implications for Redevelopment

- **Coordination with WisDOT:** The Site Analysis and Business Plan underscore the potential of a public market being a 'gateway' into downtown, and the Business Plan includes illustrations to this end. Should the Xcel site be selected for the public market, further coordination between the City of La Crosse and WisDOT can ensure that the preferred alternative in the WIS 53 Corridor Study corresponds with a higher-intensity, downtown land use. This may include roadway reconfiguration with narrower travel lanes and speed countermeasures.
- **Coordination with Oktoberfest:** The 'Riverside Festival' site identified in the

Site Analysis is primarily situated on the Oktoberfest grounds. While the conceptual plans site the market building on the former Xcel site, Oktoberfest staff has used that site in the past for programming purposes. Coordination will be needed to ensure both uses are not only compatible but also synergistic.

- **Coordination with Xcel Energy:** There is existing active gas and electric utility infrastructure occupying the Riverside Festival site. This includes overhead transformers above the Oktoberfest grounds and underground gas lines beneath the former Xcel energy site where, according to the Business Plan, the proposed market building is sited.

Conditions Assessment Report, Wisconsin Railway Light & Power Building (2020)

This report provides an architectural and technical analysis of the Wisconsin Railway Light and Power Building (621 3rd Street North), a two-story brick building located on the point where Second and Third Streets separate. Constructed in 1914, the building originally served as a sub-station for the City's electric streetcar system and was later occupied by Northern States Power Company. The property is currently owned by the City of La Crosse.

The report includes detailed assessments of the building's exterior and interior, specifically analyzing the structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and highlighting areas in need of repair or replacement. It also provides a comprehensive analysis of the building's architectural features and historic significance, both of which speak to the area's industrial heritage. Despite its historic significance, the building is neither listed

Figure 8: Image of the former Light & Power Building, Corner of 2nd and 3rd Streets.



individually on the National Register of Historic Places nor located in the boundaries of the City's commercial historic district.

The study recommends a phased approach to rehabilitation, starting with immediate repairs to the façade, windows, and ADA non-compliant areas. Future phases include potential additions to the building to accommodate new uses, such as city offices or public meeting spaces. The report emphasizes the importance of maintaining the building's historic character while upgrading its systems for modern use. It also provides a financial

analysis, estimating the costs of various renovation scenarios and suggesting that the building's high visibility and historical significance make it a valuable asset for the City.

Applicable Concepts & Guidelines

- **Building location:** The building is highly visible and serves as a key focal point which signifies one's entrance into downtown.
- **Building condition:** The report states that existing conditions of the building reflect a point in time, and that they should be re-

evaluated prior to beginning any work.

Implications for Redevelopment

- **Historic status:** The building is not eligible for state or federal historic tax credits. However, the report states that it could be locally listed under the criteria of Industry and Commerce given its role in powering the streetcar system and its overall context within the industrial district for which that area was well known.
- **Remediation:** It is highly recommended that an environmental study of the property be conducted prior to redevelopment. The report notes that the old Sanborn maps depict a circular structure that is listed as a 500,000 cubic foot "gas holder", and that remnants of this structure appear to remain on the property.
- **Building maintenance:** The conditions of building components labeled as 'poor' and 'very poor' in the report should be prioritized for inclusion into the City's Capital Improvement Plan. This also should include elements that were not analyzed, most importantly the roof.
- **Potential tenants:** The City can initiate discussion with entities who may be interested in occupying the building, including the La Crosse Historical Society. Alternately, the City may wish to publish a Request for Proposal to solicit interest from local or regional developers.

La Crosse County Historical Society Business Plan (2022)

This report details the fundamental components of a business plan and future museum building for the La Crosse County Historical Society, including contextual, market, and museum performance analyses in addition to phasing, operation, location, and facility recommendations. These concepts contribute to a high-level document outlining the museum’s requirements.

Key focuses of the plan include, but are not limited to, a modern building that serves as a county hub, multidisciplinary educational spaces, rotating exhibition spaces, visitor engagement, and local history. The La Crosse Area Heritage Center, which has operated since 2019, currently serves as a temporary location. Six sites have been listed as most suitable for use, including the Xcel Energy site which is located within the study area.

Phasing of the project is implemented in two parts, with study projections given for phase 1 due to timeline uncertainty. The study recommends a 35,000 to 50,000 total square foot facility in either one- or two-story configuration. A full build-out scenario, including expenses and revenue for the first three years is also included, though it does not include potential building expenses. The report includes projected visitor numbers over a three-year timeframe as well as projected revenue sources, including but not limited to venue rental, fundraising, donations, and educational programming.

Applicable Concepts & Guidelines

- **Building location:** If LCHS was to select the former Xcel Energy site, the museum would serve as a visual indicator and entrance to the downtown area with its perimeter

Table 2: Space Needs Summary for Proposed LCHS Facility.
Source: La Crosse County Historical Society

One-Story Building			
	Building	Site	Total
Phase 1	33,356	28,600	61,956
Phase 2	15,177	9,200	24,377
Total Area (SF)	48,533	35,800	84,333
Multi-Story Building			
	Building	Site	Total
Phase 1	34,918	28,600	63,518
Phase 2	15,177	9,200	24,377
Total Area (SF)	50,096	35,800	85,895

‘gateway’ location and as a hub in the ‘hub and spoke’ model for other natural and cultural assets in La Crosse.

- **Relationship to downtown:** The La Crosse County Historical Museum accommodates both physical and historical relationships with the City of La Crosse. All potential locations are within the city’s downtown, with one site located within study boundaries.
- **Historical contribution:** The study area is rich in history, and a museum located in or around the study area will undoubtedly elevate its history even more.

Implications for Redevelopment

- **Viability of the Xcel Energy Site:** The plan’s Site Selection analysis on Page 58 details the identification of 23 sites, with

six deemed most suitable for development of the museum. The study area contains the Xcel Energy site, near the Oktoberfest grounds. The site meets criteria relating to size, parking availability, accessibility, visibility, location, outdoor programming, and future expansion.

- **Active Planning Efforts:** The Discovery Campus incorporates a proposed home for the LCHS at the former Xcel Energy Site, addressing the space requirements while incorporating other adjacent uses that foster additional activity at the site.

Discovery Campus Overview (2023)

This report provides an overview of the proposed Discovery Campus, a project which emerged out of planning efforts conducted by the La Crosse County Historical Society. Strategically located along and across the La Crosse River, parallel to US-53, the site would serve as a gateway to downtown and a house a variety of natural, cultural, and recreational activities.

Figure 9: The proposed campus would situated northeast of Oktoberfest, on the former Xcel Energy site.



The campus would include five major components:

- **Discovery Navigator:** This space would feature a digital map that highlights a wide range of local destinations—from hospitality, to education, to recreation—that cater both to community members and regional visitors.
- **La Crosse County Historical Society Museum:** The campus would become the new home of the museum and, as described in the report, serve as a “local anchor” to the campus. Together, the campus components will be an important means of meeting the museum’s stated goal of 50,000 museum attendees annually.
- **Great River Road Experience:** This is referred to as an “interpretive center” that would educate visitors about the diverse natural, commercial, and transportation-related features along the Mississippi River corridor and across the ten states that share the corridor.
- **National Birders Center:** Located in the marshland associated with the La Crosse river, the center would offer year-round birding experiences and educational opportunities in conjunction with organizations like the National Audubon Society.
- **Dahl Auto Museum:** The campus would also become the new home for an automobile collection associated with the Dahl family, who own an auto dealership and body shop near the study area.

The project team corresponded with Discovery Campus representatives over the course of this report. The representatives highlighted recent updates including a \$200,000 grant from the La

Crosse Area Community Foundation to conduct a full feasibility study of the project. Representatives also noted that the project is the focus of a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant.

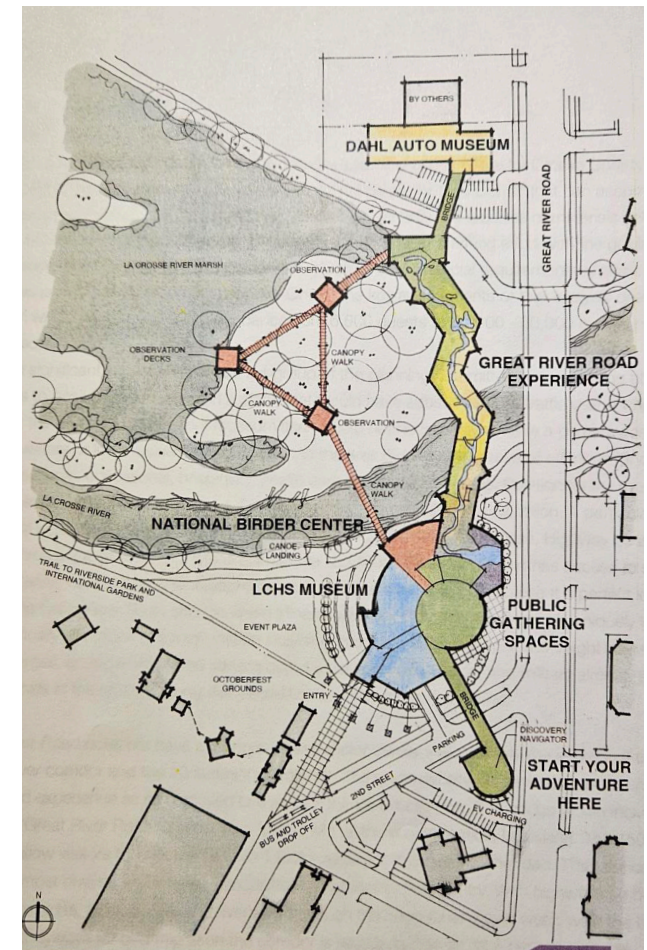
Applicable Concepts & Guidelines

- **Building location:** Located within the Riverside study area, the building serves as a perimeter entrance monument to downtown, providing a location for regional education, visitation, and nature viewing.

Implications for Redevelopment

- **Coordination with Oktoberfest:** Due to the study’s interaction through location with Oktoberfest grounds, coordination should be established with Oktoberfest staffing to ensure synergy and timely usage.
- **La Crosse River interaction:** It is recommended that an ecological study of the La Crosse River and river marsh is conducted prior to the development to establish control variables and ensure consistency of nature.
- **Coordination with Xcel Energy:** As there are active existing power and gas infrastructure above and below ground within the proposed site, communication with Xcel Energy to locate utilities and potential hazards should be established.

Figure 10: Conceptual Site Plan of Proposed Discovery Campus.
Source: Representative of Discovery Campus, Inc. The figure does not indicate a final design nor is it a construction document.



Data Review

Rather than duplicate efforts from previous plans and studies conducted for the City of La Crosse, the project team reviewed existing documents and validated assumptions. Where appropriate, additional information has been added.

Forward La Crosse 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Demographic information that is most likely to change from the time the plan was drafted to the time of this report includes population projections and median household income.

At the time the comprehensive plan was drafted, the estimated population for the City of La Crosse was 50,869. Population estimates were provided with varied rates of annual growth.

Table 3: Excerpt from La Crosse 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Population Projections. *Source: City of La Crosse*

Growth Scenario	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	Avg. Annual Growth Rate
High Growth	53,160	53,868	54,725	55,754	56,979	58,421	0.40%
Stable	52,417	52,649	52,870	53,081	53,284	53,480	0.08%
Decline	51,525	51,223	50,820	50,313	49,705	48,994	-0.20%

The Wisconsin Department of Administration estimates that the population of La Crosse in 2024 was 52,115 indicating that, for right now, the city is following the stable growth rate trajectory.

Median income has also risen from \$46,438 in 2021 to \$53,803 (2023 ACS 5-year estimates in 2023 inflation adjusted dollars). Esri predicts that in 2024, the median income is moderately higher (\$54,326).

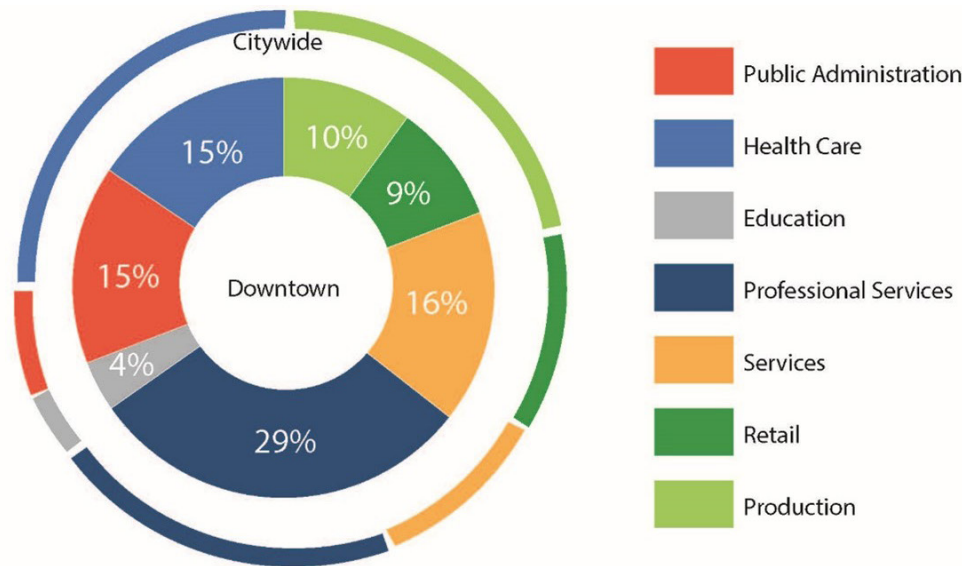
Imagine 2040 La Crosse Downtown Plan

This plan was adopted in August 2021 after twelve months of planning and public engagement. Data points in the Imagine 2040 plan which informed the assumptions of the Downtown La Crosse River

Area Inventory and Redevelopment Plan include the following:

- Downtown is a medical, educational and employment hub for the region. Anchor institutions provide strong employment bases and often have a need for supporting services/businesses - these institutions create a significant economic base in the area that further investment.
- Major employment sectors in the city are health care (25% of jobs), professional services (23% of jobs), and production (21% of jobs)
- Within downtown, major employment sectors are professional services (29% of jobs), followed by accommodation and entertainment (16% of jobs), health care (15%), and public administration (15%)
- The development of recent mixed use projects including Belle Square, The Hub, and Landmark by the Rivers, have shown downtown's appeal for a variety of new uses, especially higher density residential development.

Figure 11: Excerpt from Imagine 2040 La Crosse Downtown Plan, Employment by Industry. Source: City of La Crosse



Additional Data Points

Median Rent

Median rent in 2023 was \$977 per month (2023 ACS 5-year estimates). As previously stated, the median annual household income is \$54,326. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines affordable housing as that costs a household no more than 30% of their gross income, including utilities. Therefore, a household living in La Crosse with an income of \$54,326 could spend up to \$1,507 on rent and utilities, and have it considered affordable.

Demographic Tapestry Segment Profiles

Esri Tapestry Segmentation provides socioeconomic and demographic descriptions of neighborhoods. The descriptions within each segment identify consumer markets, as well as potential new

A household living in La Crosse with an income of \$54,325 could spend up to \$1,507 on rent and utilities and have it be considered affordable.

markets due to population growth, demographic and socioeconomic change and transforming consumer behavior. Reflecting the diversity among American neighborhoods, Tapestry includes 67 distinct market segments. The top three tapestry segments identified for the City of La Crosse are Set to Impress, College Towns, and Rustbelt Traditions. The following briefly summarizes these segments, but more detailed information is provided in the appendix.

Set to Impress

This demographic is likely still enrolled in a higher

educational institution, working while in school, and living alone in an off-campus apartment complex. They are frugal consumers looking for a deal while also reflecting the latest trends and fashions which can lead to impulse shopping. While independent, family connection is important to them. This group is more likely to be found in urban areas where it is easy to bike or walk to work. They prefer quick meals that can fit in with their busy schedules.

College Towns

Similar to Set to Impress, half of this group are college students while the rest are employed by a college or provides services for a college. They live in lower rent housing or dorms, are new to managing their finances, tend to make impulse buys, and are digitally savvy. In fact, they prefer online transactions rather than in-person. They seek new experiences and adventure. When biking or walking is not an option, they prefer transportation options that are environmentally friendly and/or get good gas mileage.

Rustbelt Traditions

Rustbelt Traditions residents are a mix of married-couple families and singles living in modest, single-family homes built in the 1950s. Most have a high-school diploma and some have attended higher educational institutions. They are primarily employed in manufacturing, retail trade, and health care industries which provide modest incomes. "While most income is derived from wages and salaries, nearly 31% of households collect Social Security and nearly 20% draw income from retirement accounts." However, their average net worth is nearly \$400,000. Hardworking, budget-aware consumers that favor American-made products, read newspapers, and are family-oriented.

Existing Conditions

Introduction

On July 1, 2024, the project team met with staff from the City of La Crosse Department of Planning and Development to conduct a kickoff meeting for the project and tour the study area. The below images illustrate some of the land uses which characterize the study area. Despite its proximity to the downtown core, previous plans have described the study area as being separated or disconnected from downtown. This can be attributed generally to the absence of a traditional street grid applied to the entire study area, paired with large building footprints, surface parking lots, and open space, some of which is used for recreational purposes.



Large, Contemporary Buildings:

Many of which are established through the Planned Development process.



Traditional, Historic Buildings:

Buildings such as Landmark by the Rivers are a testament to the industrial heritage of the study area.



Surface Parking: This accounts for nearly 28 percent of land used in the study area and is indicative of the preference for large, off-street parking lots at the time of development.



Riverfront and Natural Areas: The study area is adjacent to Riverside Park and the confluence of the La Crosse and Mississippi Rivers, and made accessible through a network of trails and sidepaths.

Land Use

Overview

The study area is comprised of 46.5 acres, or approximately 2,024,750 square feet, of space. Figure 9 illustrates both the built- and non-built environment spaces within the study area. This includes building footprints (20 buildings which occupy 16 percent of the study area), open space (which occupies 20 percent of the study area), and more.

Note that this is distinct from the zoning and existing land use categories content described in subsequent pages. For example, a ‘Planned Development’ land use category below likely includes both ‘Building Footprints’ and ‘Open Space’.

Table 4: Built- and Non-Built Environment in the Study Area.

Source: City of La Crosse

Built- and Non-Built Environment	Area (Ac)	% of Study Area (Ac)
Building Footprints	7.29	15.7%
Vacant Parcels	3.09	6.6%
Oktoberfest Grounds	4.34	9.3%
Surface Parking	13.57	29.2%
Open Space	9.34	20.1%
Right of Way and Remaining Parcel Space	8.85	19.0%
Total	46.48	100%

Figure 12: Built- and Non-Built Environment in the Study Area



Parcels and Ownership

Of the 15 property owners in the study area, JJAWC LLC owns and manages the largest number of parcels with 10.78 acres accounting for 27 percent of the study area. 3 Real Estate LLC owns the second largest number of parcels with 7.77 acres, which accounts for 19 percent of the study area, respectively. All property in the study area totals 1,753,004 parcel square feet across 40.2 acres of land, with 30 total parcels. Of these 30, five are public, while 25 are privately owned.

Table 5: Parcels by Owner in Study Area. *Source: City of La Crosse*

Owner	Parcel Area (Ac)	% of Study Area (Ac)
JJAWC LLC	10.78	26.8%
3 Real Estate LLC	7.77	19.3%
100 Harborview Partners LLC	4.11	10.2%
Northern States Power Co	3.74	9.3%
Clifford LeClerc Revocable Trust	2.54	6.3%
La Crosse Hotel Group LLC	2.43	6.0%
Riverplace One LLC	2.11	5.2%
La Crosse GSRS LLC	1.50	3.7%
Vine St Realty LLC	1.30	3.2%
City Of La Crosse	1.15	2.8%
Three Rivers LLC	0.88	2.2%
North Central Trust Company	0.85	2.1%
Credit Union	0.66	1.6%
Charmant Hotel LLC	0.22	0.5%
129 Vine LLC	0.21	0.5%
Total	40.24	100%

Figure 13: Parcels by Owner in Study Area



Zoning, Existing Land Use

Zoning. Existing zoning in the study area consists of five zoning designations: Planned Development (PD), Commercial (C2), Community Business (C3), Heavy Industrial (M2), and Public and Semi-Public (PS). A brief description of each zoning designation is summarized below.

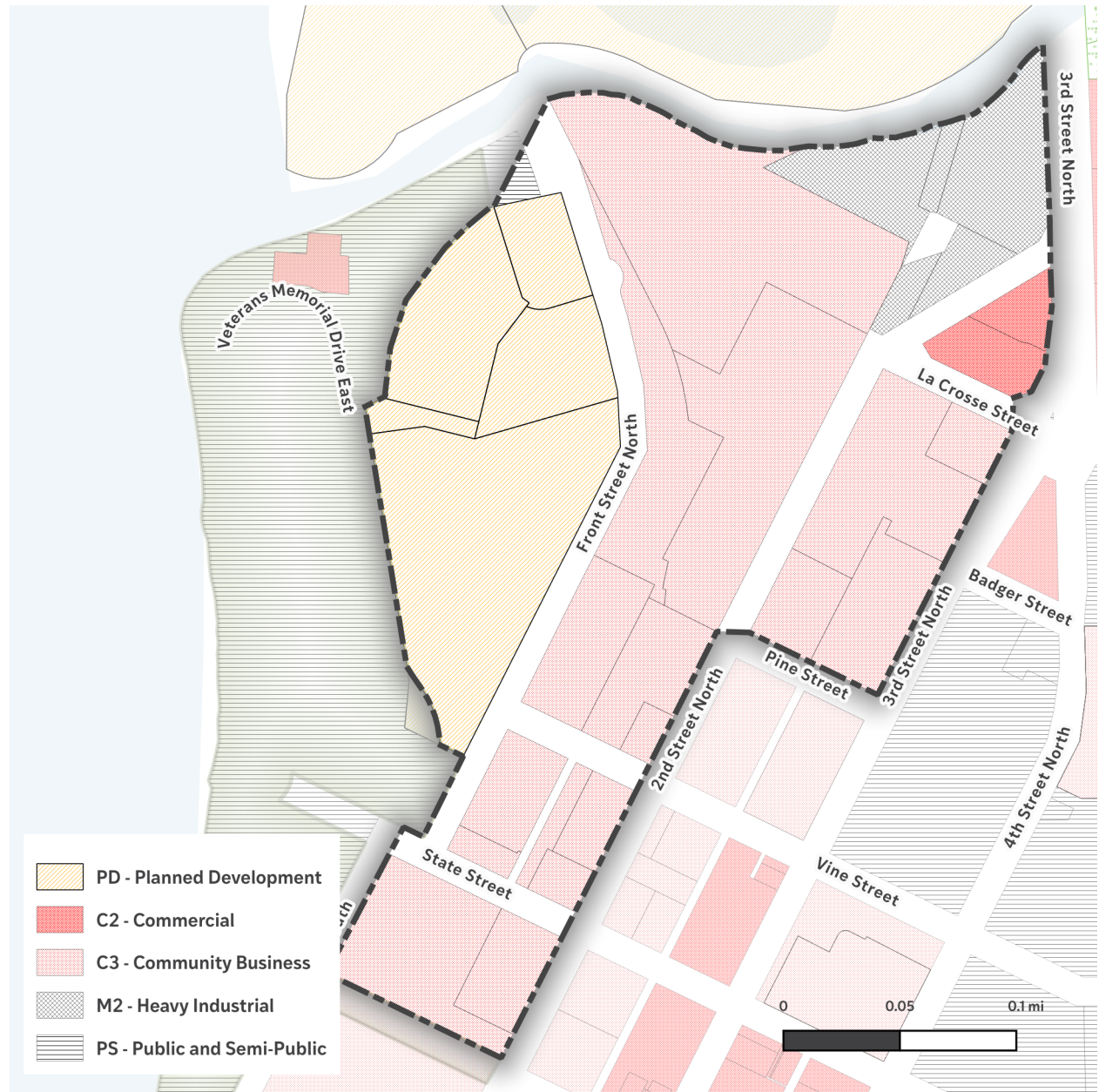
Planned Development (PD): This district is designed and intended to enable and encourage the development of large tracts of land or urban infill sites which are planned under unified ownership or control, or lands which by reason of existing or planned land uses are appropriate for development, so as to achieve land development patterns which will maintain and enhance the physical, social, and economic values of an area. The Planned Development District may be developed only in accordance with a specific comprehensive development plan takes into account pedestrian and vehicular traffic, recreation and open space, construction and planning standards, mixing of compatible uses, and more. Height, yard, setback, parking, lot coverage, and other applicable standards will be consistent with other adjacent zoning districts.

Table 6: Existing Zoning Classifications in the Study Area.

Source: City of La Crosse

Zoning Designation	Area (Ac)	% of Study Area (Ac)
Planned Development (PD)	10.74	27%
Commercial (C2)	1.08	3%
Community Business (C3)	24.41	61%
Heavy Industrial (M2)	3.87	9%
Public and Semi-Public	0.13	>1%
Total	40.24	100%

Figure 14: Existing Zoning Classifications in the Study Area



Commercial (C2): This district is currently intended to permit both small- and large-scale development and limits the creation or modification of new or existing land or buildings in its respective zone. No new or structurally altered building in this district shall exceed 100ft or eight stories in height. Side yards shall follow local business district regulations, while rear yards shall have at least 9ft in depth, and a minimum dwelling unit separation of 20ft. No new or structurally altered buildings or land shall be erected except for the following uses, which include, but are not limited to; any use permitted in the Local Business District (C1), general garages, used car lots, and applicable uses in Article VI of municipal code of ordinances.

Community Business (C3): This district is currently intended to permit low-intensity and high-quality development and limit the creation or modification of new or existing land or buildings in its respective zone. No new or structurally altered building this district shall exceed 160ft in height, and side yards shall be no less than 6ft in width. No new or structurally altered building or land shall be erected except for the following uses, which include, but are not limited to; public buildings, offices, financial institutions, hotels/motels, private and public recreation and cultural facilities, residences above the first floor, restaurants, retail, and service establishments.

Heavy Industrial (M2): This district is currently intended to permit a variety of indoor and outdoor industrial land or building usage not in conflict with City ordinance. The code lists a number of dangerous, offensive, obnoxious, or similar uses for which a building permit shall not be issued, such as a cement manufacturer or a trash facility, unless it is approved by the Common Council or Board of Zoning. The code also states that no building or land shall exceed 100ft in height, and that yards and courts must use Commercial District (C2) regulations. This zoning designation is applied

exclusively to the former Xcel Energy site within the study area

Public and Semi-Public (PS): This district is currently intended to permit the use of Public and Semi-Public land or buildings. No building or land shall exceed 120ft in height. Buildings shall be set back 10ft from public right of ways plus an additional foot per 5ft of building exceeding 35ft. No land in this district shall be used except for the following uses, which include, but are not limited to; governmental or educational offices and facilities, historical structures, public parks, gardens, and plazas, YMCA and similar non-profits, and hospitals with at least 25 practitioners. This zoning designation is applied exclusively to Riverside Park in the study area.

There are two additional zoning-related items of relevance to the study area:

Sec. 115-390 (1) (e) of the city's Zoning Code requires buildings to be a minimum of two stories in height. This is designed to prohibit automobile-oriented development typifying a suburban commercial district (e.g. fast food restaurants, 'big box' stores) and instead facilitate multi-story commercial/office uses within the district.

The housing-related section of the La Crosse 2040 Comprehensive Plan ('A Place to Call Home') recommends a comprehensive review and update of the city's Zoning Code. While some of the development barriers are ostensibly related to single-family residential districts, others are of relevance to the study area given its potential to include additional residential units. This includes off-street parking requirements and minimum lot size and setbacks.

Existing Land Use. According to the La Crosse 2040 Comprehensive Plan the city has 12 land use categories, five of which are represented in the

study area: 'Planned Development', 'Commercial', 'Heavy Industrial', 'Light Industrial', and 'Public and Semi-Public'.

The highest percentage of land use within the study area falls under the 'Commercial' land use category, which is appropriate given its location in the downtown district. This is followed by the 'Planned Development' land use category which comprises 27% of the land area.

The land use map in the Comprehensive Plan remains largely accurate with some exceptions. First, the 'Heavy Industrial' land use is the former

Figure 15: Excerpt from La Crosse 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Existing Land Use Map. Source: City of La Crosse

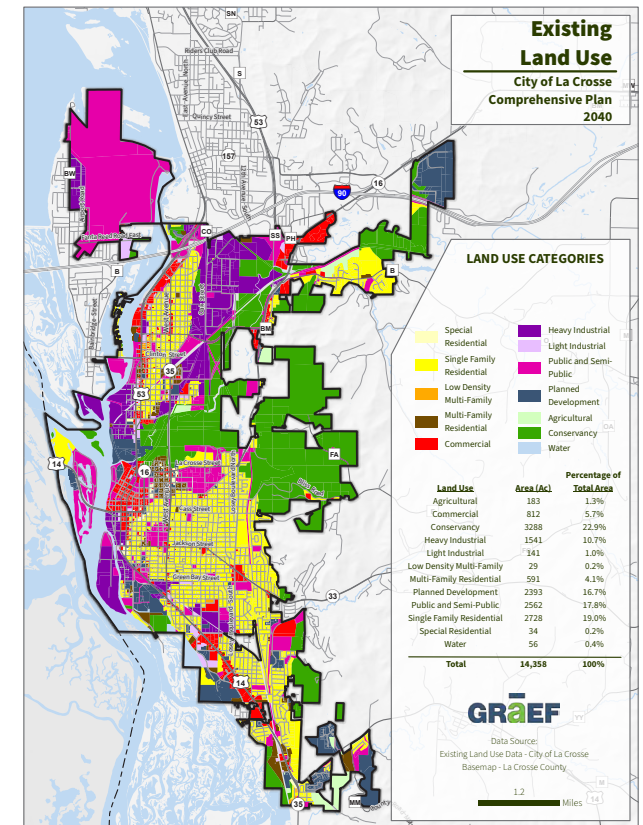


Table 7: Land Use Categories in the Study Area.

Source: City of La Crosse

Land Use Category	Area (Ac)	% of Study Area (Ac)
Planned Development	10.75	23.1%
Commercial	24.17	52.0%
Heavy Industrial	3.73	8.0%
Light Industrial	1.33	2.9%
Public and Semi-Public	0.15	0.9%
Right of Way	6.08	13.1%
Total	46.48	100%

Xcel Energy site and is currently vacant. Second, the 'Light Industrial' land use is the former La Crosse Tribune building and is slated for demolition at the time of this report.

Future Land Use

With the exception of Riverside Park and existing right of way, the future land use of the study area is designated as 'Downtown'. This designation aligns with the Preferred Land Use Map in the La Crosse 2040 Comprehensive Plan, where the study area is identified as a 'D-3 Downtown District'. Within this district, medium- and high-density residential as well as high-intensity mixed-use are the land use categories deemed most desirable for the area.

Figure 16: Future Land Use in the Study Area



Floodway and Floodplain

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) produces Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). FIRMs are official floodplain maps that illustrate the 1-percent annual chance floodplain (also known as the 100-year floodplain, Special Flood Hazard Areas, or 'SFHA') and the 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain (also known as the 500-year floodplain). These floodplain maps are used by the City to ensure that floodplain management standards are applied to land development.

FIRMs may include regulatory floodways. A regulatory floodway refers to the channel of a river or other watercourse and adjacent land areas that must be reserved to discharge the base flood (100-year flood event). Land development in the floodway is highly regulated, as it considers potential impacts to the carrying capacity of the floodway and potential impacts to base flood elevations.

Figure 14 shows the regulatory floodway and floodplain within and around the study area. There are 3 parcels in the study area that are partially located in the 100-year floodplain, none of which include structures on their lot.

Figure 17: Regulatory Floodway and Floodplain Related to the Study Area



Given the presence of a SFHA in the study area, it is important that any site scenarios which propose new buildings and substantial improvements in the SFHA must be properly elevated. The City of La Crosse Code of Ordinances addresses the requirement for new development to manage stormwater impacts in Chapter 105 – Erosion Control and Stormwater Management, specifically Article III – Post-Construction Stormwater Management, Sections 105-50 through 105-60. One of the ways stormwater impacts have been addressed in some downtown developments is underground water storage tanks. Some developments downtown have included underground water storage tanks. Future development may incur additional cost to offset this environmental impact.

There are 13 parcels within the study area that are partially located in the 500-year floodplain. Regarding these 13 parcels:

- Seven do not have a structure on the lot (e.g. the former Xcel Energy site);
- Five have a structure or structures on the lot that are partially or completely within the floodplain (e.g. Oktoberfest grounds); and
- One has a structure on the lot, but not in the floodplain (i.e. Riverplace Apartments).

Notably, the parcel on which the Oktoberfest grounds are located as well as N. Front St. is largely within the 500-year floodplain. A regrade and reconstruction of N. Front St. is itemized, but currently labeled 'unfunded', in the city's recent Capital Improvement Plan (2026-2030). The project would help mitigate flash flooding by draining stormwater to the La Crosse River.

Figure 18: Oktoberfest Grounds.



Figure 19: Front Street North, looking north.



Transportation

Existing Facilities

A network of streets, sidewalks, paths, and bikeways provide multiple ways to access destinations in the study area. Segments of Front Street, 2nd Street North, La Crosse Street, Pine Street, Vine Street, and State Street are present in the study area, all of which are under local jurisdiction. These streets connect to a system of city-owned connectors and arterials as well as state- and federal-owned arterial roadways, including Highway 16 (La Crosse Street) and US-53. 2nd Street is classified as a minor arterial with an Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) of nearly 11,000 vehicles.

Sidewalks are present along both sides of each street in the study area and are in good condition. These sidewalks provide access not only to each destination in the study area but also Riverside Park, which has its own system of sidewalks and side paths. To the north, the 3 Rivers Trail is a shared-use path with a bridge that provides access to the Riverside North Trail. In addition to these trails, bicycle users can also access the 2nd Street Cycle Track; this is an approximately one-mile separated facility beginning at La Crosse Street to the north and ending at Market Street to the south.

Figure 15 illustrates the transportation network within and around the study area, including existing facilities and proposed improvements. The proposed improvements are based on recommendations from the City's recently published Bicycle and Master Plan Update (2024). The plan addresses a number of walking and biking barriers indicated by residents; regarding the study area, this includes US-53 at La Crosse Street. The 'Long Term Separated Facility' in the legend (red dashed line) refers to the US-53 Corridor Study and its preferred alternative, which is pending at the time of this study. A summary of the study is provided in Section II (Previous Plans, Studies, Reports).

Figure 20: Existing Transportation Network and Proposed Improvements



Parking

Off-Street Facilities and Supply. The study area includes 16 surface parking lots, of which two (next to the city-owned Light and Power building) are considered public and 14 are private. There are three properties that include indoor parking (RiverPlace Apartments, Landmark by the Rivers, and 333 Front

Figure 21: Off-Street Parking Facilities Around Study Area



Table 8: Off-Street Parking Facilities and Supply Around Study Area

Key	Type	Acres	# of Spaces
1	lot	0.41	47
2	lot	0.75	72
3	lot	2.29	188
4	lot	1.01	103
5	lot	0.29	24
6	lot	0.07	10
7	lot	0.05	3
8	lot	1.63	124
9	lot	1.99	179
10	lot	0.12	10
11	lot	1.40	147
12	lot	0.15	16
13	ramp	1.01	605
14	lot	0.56	72
15	lot	1.03	174
16	lot	0.11	14
17	lot	1.70	166
18	ramp	0.84	395
Total		15.42	2,350

Street), and one property that includes a detached at-grade parking garage (RiverPlace Apartments). For the purposes of scenario planning, this section also includes the Pine Street and Main Street parking ramps, which are adjacent to the study area. As previously mentioned, surface parking comprises 13.6 acres, or 29.2 percent of the study area; the addition of the parking ramps outside the area increases the acreage to 15.4 acres.

Put together, the surface parking lots and ramps include an estimated total of 2,350 off-street parking spaces. 43 percent of the parking spaces are public (largely due to the inclusion of the municipal parking ramps, with the disclaimer that 492 of the 605 parking spaces in the Pine Street ramp are permitted), and 57 percent of the parking spaces are private. This estimate was calculated using a desktop survey and data from the 2020 Downtown Parking Study. It is important to note that this estimate does not include the indoor parking spaces associated with the three properties above, nor does it include pending developments (e.g. mixed-use development on the site of the La Crosse Tribune building).

On-Street Facilities and Supply. Table 9 shows that there are an estimated 193 on-street parking spaces within the study area. This estimate was calculated using data from the 2020 Downtown Parking Study and compared against recent images via a desktop survey. The addition of the 2nd Street cycletrack resulted in an estimated loss of 29 parking spaces, and an additional 22 parking spaces adjacent to the Oktoberfest site were counted. Figure 16 does not include on-street facilities due to discrepancies between signage observed in the desktop survey and parking regulation types outlined in Table DT-2 in the 2020 Parking Study.

The 193 on-street parking spaces, paired with the 2,350 off-street parking spaces, results in a total of 2,543 parking spaces related to the study area.

Parking Demand, 10-Year Forecast. The 2020 Downtown Parking Study includes a detailed description of existing utilization rates as well as 5- and 10-year forecasts in and around the study area. Table 10 uses data from Table DT-12, 'Surplus/Deficit – Future 10 Years', from page 31 of the study. With the exception of Block 16A (100 Harborview Place) and 35A (which includes 333 Front Street and Grandstay Hotel), each block estimates a parking surplus over the next ten years. **This results in a net surplus of 1,049 parking spaces.**

Of course, Table 10 does not include development projects underway, conceptualized as part of this plan, or completed since the report was published. Further, given the boundaries articulated in the 2020 study, the table may not include all or a part of RiverPlace Apartments or the spaces on 2nd Street N and La Crosse Streets. It is also unknown whether or not the consultant included indoor parking spaces into the forecast.

Table 9: Supply of On-Street Parking Types by Block Within Study Area. Source: *Downtown Parking Study Update & Analysis of Expanded Areas, 2020.*

Block	2 hr	Remaining	Total
16A	28	16	44
29	25	0	25
35	29	0	29
35A	45	0	45
41	19	9	28
NE Gateway	0	22	22
Total	146	46	193

Table 10: 10-Year Surplus/Deficit Estimates of Parking by Block in and around Study Area. Source: *Downtown Parking Study Update & Analysis of Expanded Areas, 2020.*

Block	Vacant	Future 10 Year Demand	Public Total	Private Total	Public & Private Total	Gross	Net
16A	0	49	44	0	44	-5	-5
23	0	122	422	20	442	320	320
29	0	69	25	245	270	201	25
35	0	106	57	342	399	293	57
35A	0	274	45	213	258	-16	-16
36	12	50	640	93	733	683	640
41	17	100	28	192	220	120	28
Total	29	770	1,261	1,105	2,366	1,596	1,049

Stakeholder Engagement

Primary research via direct conversations and observations generates data specifically for the current project, moving beyond reliance on pre-existing information. The project team met with key stakeholders to answer two critical questions: How do individuals envision their interactions with this section of downtown La Crosse, and what are the specific interests of property owners regarding their properties in this area?

Stakeholder Selection and Process

Due to the small geographic area of this plan and the recent downtown plans that sought wide community input, the consultant team took a more narrow approach to stakeholder input for this plan.

The stakeholders consisted of representatives from the following groups:

- Property owners
- Business owners
- Explore La Crosse
- Xcel Energy

- Resident within the study area
- Downtown Neighborhood Association
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)
- Oktoberfest
- City of La Crosse (including City staff and District 6 Council Member Chris Kahlow)

Stakeholders were invited to share input via interviews. In total, the project team conducted a total of nine virtual interviews. These interviews began in August 2024 and occurred throughout the project. All stakeholders were informed of plan progress via email correspondence as well as an in-person meeting with City staff on January 30, 2025.

Stakeholders provided a wide range of input on the existing conditions of the study area and were asked to give feedback on each iteration of the site concept. This input led to a series of revisions to the site concept which occurred from February to May 2025. The draft plan was also presented to the following groups:

- Downtown Neighborhood Association (September 16, 2025);

- La Crosse City Plan Commission (November 3, 2025);
- La Crosse Judiciary and Administration Committee (November 4, 2025); and,
- La Crosse Common Council Meeting (November 13, 2025).

Key Themes

The stakeholder interviews yielded valuable insight on a number of issues and opportunities. For the purposes of this report, their input has been organized under five key themes:

1. Development Opportunities and Challenges

- **Desirable Area for Development:** Proximity to downtown and to water is attractive to developers. This is a connective area from new development at River Point to the historic downtown.
- **An ideal study area for key demographics:** Focusing particularly on young professionals and empty nesters.
- **Phased Development:** Projects like The Chalmers Residences are phased

due to market absorption and financing constraints.

- **Mixed-Use and Residential Growth:** There's strong interest in luxury and market-rate housing, but concerns about oversupply and softening demand exist. Some folks suggested a 'wait and see' approach, once River Point and the forthcoming development from T. Wall Enterprises is finished.
- **City Collaboration:** Mixed experiences—some developers report good relationships with the city (e.g., TIF approvals), while others cite lack of transparency or support.
- **Welcoming New Developments without Compromising Character:** Stakeholders value maintaining existing building stock and urban character while ensuring new developments complement—not replicate—existing historic architecture. Some concern expressed over the health of downtown business and how new development in this area along with River Point might cause additional challenges to the downtown core.
- **Multiple Viewpoints:** There are property owners within the study boundary who wish to invest and develop, and others who are taking a 'wait and see' approach.

2. Recreation, Entertainment, and Cultural Amenities

- **Strong Support for a Public Market:** Multiple stakeholders (residents, developers, Oktoberfest team) see potential in a public market or food hall, especially if it complements existing assets like the food co-op.
- **Cultural and Community Spaces:** Ideas include music venues, cultural centers, and

indoor/outdoor event spaces.

- **Bar-Free Evening Activities:** There is a desire for more non-bar nighttime activities and family-friendly options.
- **Oktoberfest as a Key Partner:** Oktoberfest is interested in a more permanent facility, and is willing to partner with other tenants (e.g. public market) as well as other potential event/entertainment experiences.

3. Tourism and Events as Economic Drivers

- **Oktoberfest's Central Role:** Generates significant revenue and attendance; stakeholders emphasize the need for a long-term home and infrastructure improvements.
- **Year-Round Activation:** Interest in expanding use of festival grounds beyond Oktoberfest, including winter events and community programming.
- **Tourism Trends:** Growth in leisure travel, birding, conventions, and sports events. Stakeholders want to better capture visitor spending downtown, specifically for dining and overnight stays.



- **Desire to Build a Hub:** The Discovery Campus vision promotes local, regional, and national visitors to the area via vehicle and boat traffic.

4. Connectivity, Mobility, and Parking

- **Disconnection from Downtown:** The study area feels isolated due to large surface lots and underutilized spaces.
- **Desire for Walkability:** Stakeholders prefer pedestrian- and bike-friendly infrastructure over new roads. Surface parking is seen as a barrier to vibrancy.
- **Parking Challenges:** Especially during events like Oktoberfest. Some support for shuttles and better parking management.

5. Community Identity and First Impressions

- **Cultural Representation:** Calls to highlight local cultures, including Hmong and Ho-Chunk communities, through markets, events, and public spaces.
- **Authenticity and Localism:** Emphasis on supporting local businesses, arts, and organic farmers. Comparisons to cities like Winona and Eau Claire for their authentic, arts-driven development.
- **District Identity and Feel:** Desire to make a strong first impression as visitors and residents access downtown from US-53 south, with interest of having the study area be a 'gateway' into the downtown.
- **Aesthetic Improvements:** Stakeholders expressed desire to see Oktoberfest grounds aesthetically enhanced as the area provides a first impression of the community especially to hotel visitors nearby.

Study Area Concept

Design Goals

Based on the plan review findings as well as stakeholder input, the project team developed a set of goals that informed the conceptual design process for the study area. These goals are detailed below and associated with specific site improvements in subsequent pages.



Goal 1: Provide something for everyone at a regional level.

The ‘Previous Plans, Studies, and Reports’ section highlights the importance of creating a study area that can serve residents and visitors alike. It is important that the study area concept visualizes a mixed-use environment where commercial, residential, entertainment, and recreational uses are woven together, resulting in a place that is a destination for both community members and regional tourists. A variety of destinations leads to a more active place all day and all week, as well as year-round.



Goal 2: Elevate established, successful places that are regional destinations.

Previous sections of the plan have underscored the fact that the study area is a hub of activity, with places like Riverside Park and the Oktoberfest grounds being significant regional destinations. It is important that the study area concept highlight these places, showcase potential improvements, and ensure that they are visible and well-connected amongst new or proposed redevelopments.

Goal 3: Integrate the study area into downtown.

Like many historic downtowns, a defining feature of Downtown La Crosse is its assembly of buildings which face the street, share party walls, and occupy the lot line with little to no setback. This results in an urban environment which is oriented to the pedestrian, promotes visual connectivity, and ultimately contributes to its cohesive sense of place. It is important for the study area concept to employ similar features where possible and address concerns of the study area feeling isolated or disconnected from downtown.

Figure-Ground Diagramming

A figure-ground diagram is a two-dimensional mapping technique that illustrates the relationship between built and unbuilt spaces in urban environments. It visually represents land coverage, where buildings are depicted as solid masses (the "figure") and open spaces such as streets, parks, and plazas are shown as voids (the "ground"). This type of diagram is useful

Figure 22: Figure-Ground Diagram, Study Area



for urban design and site conceptualization, as it helps analyze the spatial organization of a city.

Pictured below are figure-ground diagrams of the study area as well as downtown La Crosse and surrounding areas, both of which are the same scale. The contrast in figure and ground is evident; downtown as shown includes 124 buildings, of which 29 are in the downtown historic district, and the study area includes 21 buildings. Surface parking currently comprises nearly 30 percent of the study area.

These diagrams illustrate the importance of referencing—but not emulating—the urban form of downtown La Crosse. Referencing the built environment of downtown is a means to create a site concept that feels 'connected' to the downtown. However, it is important to note that the study area includes distinct land uses (e.g. Riverside Park, Oktoberfest grounds) that, while not captured in a figure, is an asset to the study area and community at large.

Figure 23: Figure-Ground Diagram, Downtown





Goal 4: Identify and illustrate opportunities for future vibrant destinations.

The study area is dynamic, and redevelopment plans for multiple properties are underway at the time of this report. It is important for the study area concept not only to incorporate these redevelopment plans but also to illustrate future ‘opportunity sites’, with proposed uses that complement existing ones and further promote a vibrant district.



Goal 5: Improve connectivity for people walking and biking.

Previous plans and studies have underscored the importance of providing a safe, comfortable, and connected network of walking and biking facilities. It is important for the study area concept to reflect proposed spot improvements and network-wide improvements, particularly those that address gaps in the network and enhance safety.

Figure 24: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Study Area, 1906.

Source: Library of Congress



Figure 25: Design Exercise, Presence or Absence of Grid Connectivity.



Design Process

The project team began by referencing archival Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps from the Library of Congress. Sanborn maps from 1884 and 1906 illustrate rail lines and spurs associated with the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad. While no longer visible, this rail line shaped the development pattern in the study area. Warehouses, a coal shed, a tannery, and flour mills were among the many industrial uses in close proximity to the rail line. The original freight depot pictured in the maps now serves as the Freighthouse restaurant, and rights-of-way including Front Street, North 2nd Street, and Vine Street are still present today. These streets were used as a basis for the first round of design, which consisted of strategies to create a 'corridor' feel along Front Street while identifying areas that feel disconnected due to the lack of a street grid. This was done as a means to illustrate potential

connectivity between the site and downtown as well as identify places where site massing could occur.

The project team preliminarily produced two site concepts. The first concept included zero lot line site massing along both sides of Front Street, terminating in a new vista that would serve as a prominent entrance to the Oktoberfest grounds. The second concept retained the existing right-of-way along Front Street, which curves westward. The final concept better reflects the preferences of adjacent property owners who prefer the existing road network layout and anticipates that a road reconstruction to be cost-prohibitive to the city.

These original concepts were then shared with city staff and stakeholders in a series of meetings from December 2024-June 2025. During this period, stakeholders shared a wide range of comments that

resulted in a number of revisions, including:

- Adding building footprints of proposed developments, including the Discovery Campus;
- Modifying building footprints and their frontage along the street;
- Extending the boundaries of the study area two blocks to the south;
- Illustrating the boundaries of the Oktoberfest grounds to better delineate between the grounds and adjacent uses;
- Illustrating amenities (e.g. dog park) and features (e.g. street trees); and
- Illustrating building footprints outside the study area for additional context.

Concept Overview

Aerials and Perspectives

Based on the changes outlined above, the project team developed a set of revised concepts for the study area. This includes both plan views and perspective views, all of which are rooted in the design goals. The concepts allow a wide range of people—business owners, property owners, prospective developers, and more—the opportunity to see site-specific improvements and how proposed buildings interact with each other.

Figure 30: Aerial Perspective, Final Study Area Concept, Looking Northwest.

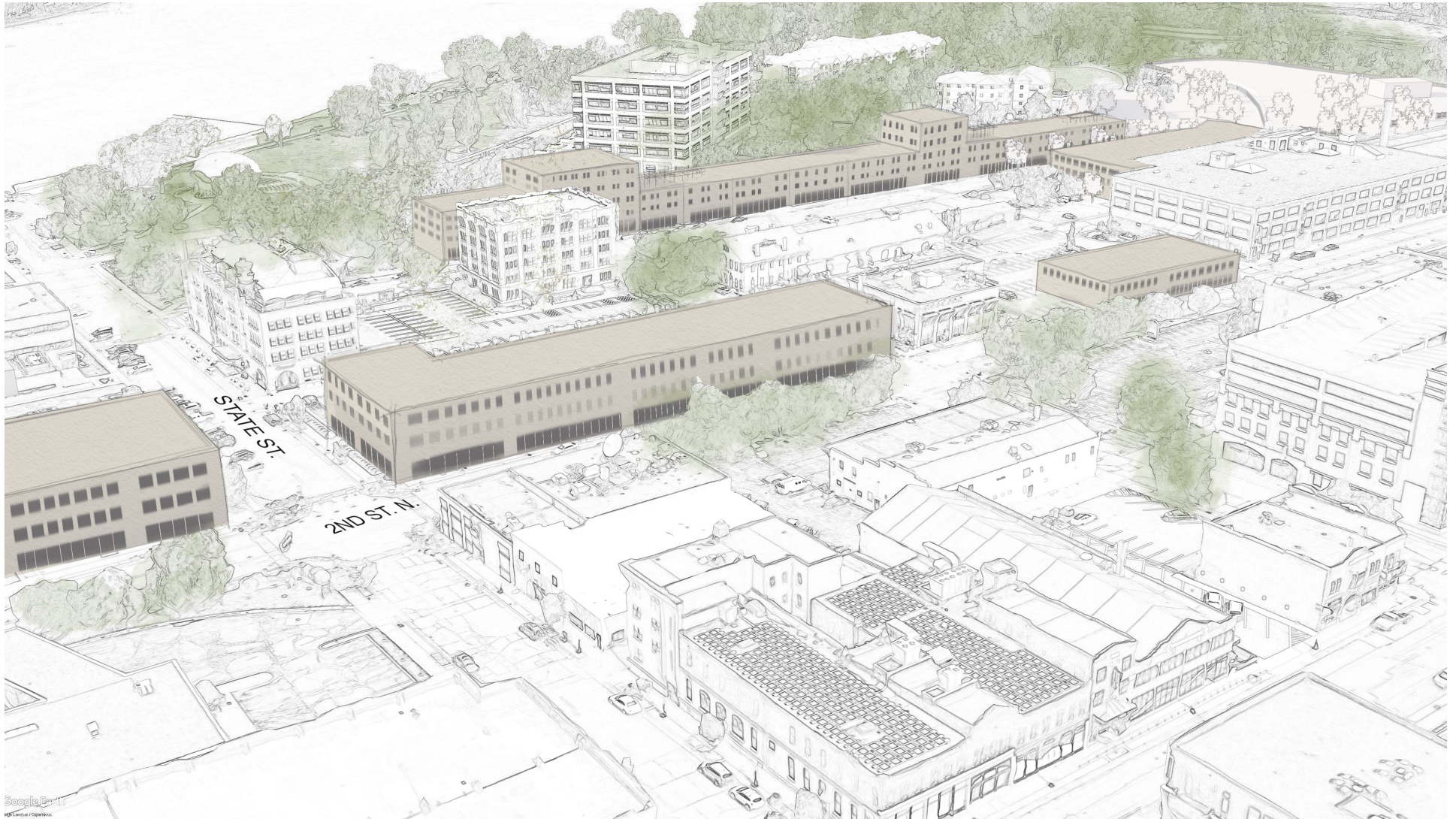
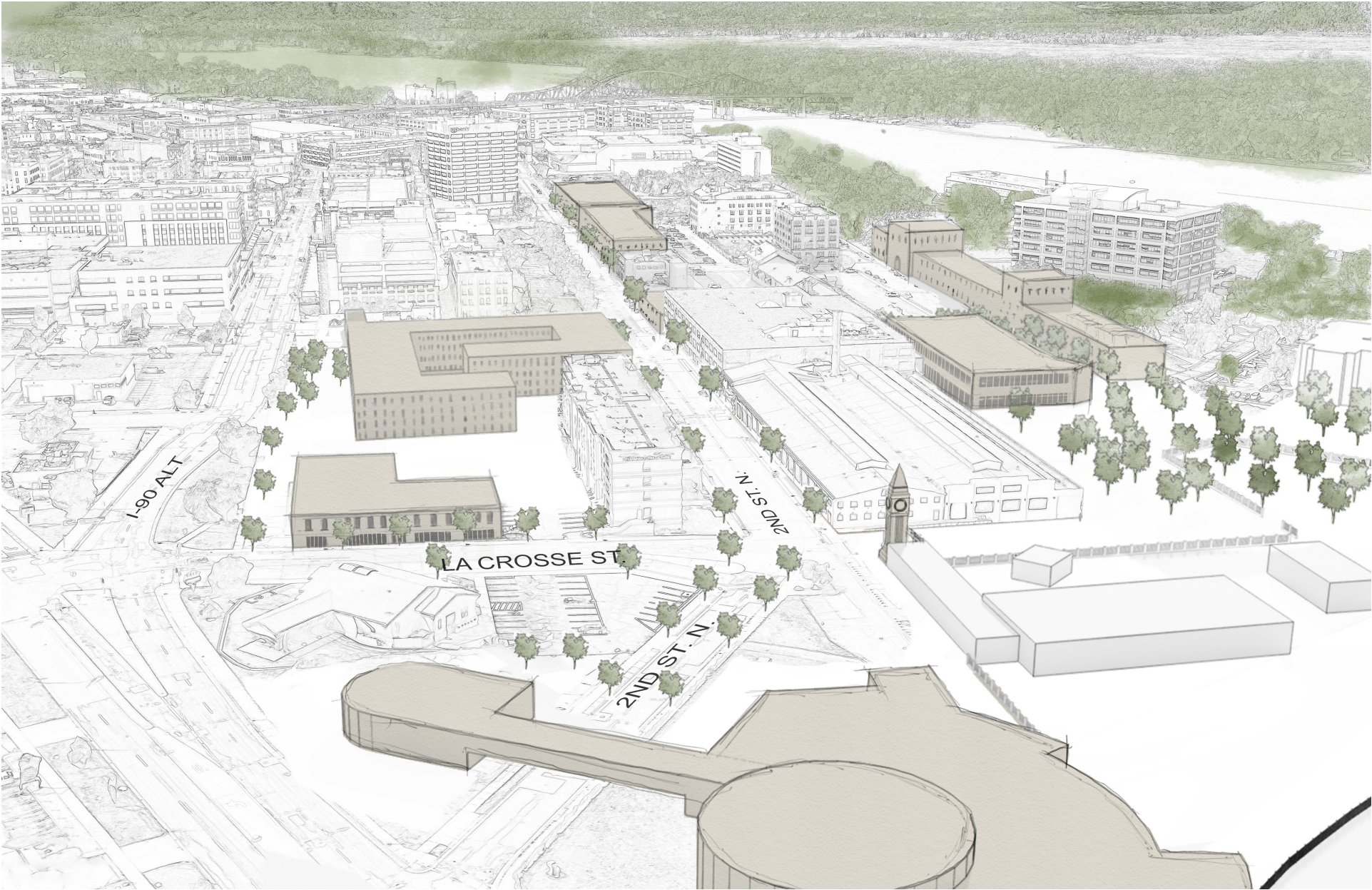


Figure 31: Aerial Perspective, Final Study Area Concept, Looking South.



Land Use Overview

The study area concept maintains the same boundary as it was visualized in the Existing Conditions section: 46.5 acres, or approximately 2,025,750 square feet, of space. The proposed land uses differ from the existing land uses in the following ways:

- Building footprints occupy a larger share of the study area at 13 acres (or 28 percent of the study area), which is due to the addition of 11 proposed buildings (including two potential locations for a public market);
- Off-street surface parking, which previously occupied nearly 30 percent of the study area, would be reduced from 13.5 to 8.2 acres (or approximately 18 percent of the study area).
- Open space is increased nominally by 1.5 acres; and
- The Oktoberfest grounds retain their existing footprint of 4.34 acres; and
- Right of way is decreased nominally, which

Figure 33: Proposed Land Use in Study Area with Opportunity Sites.



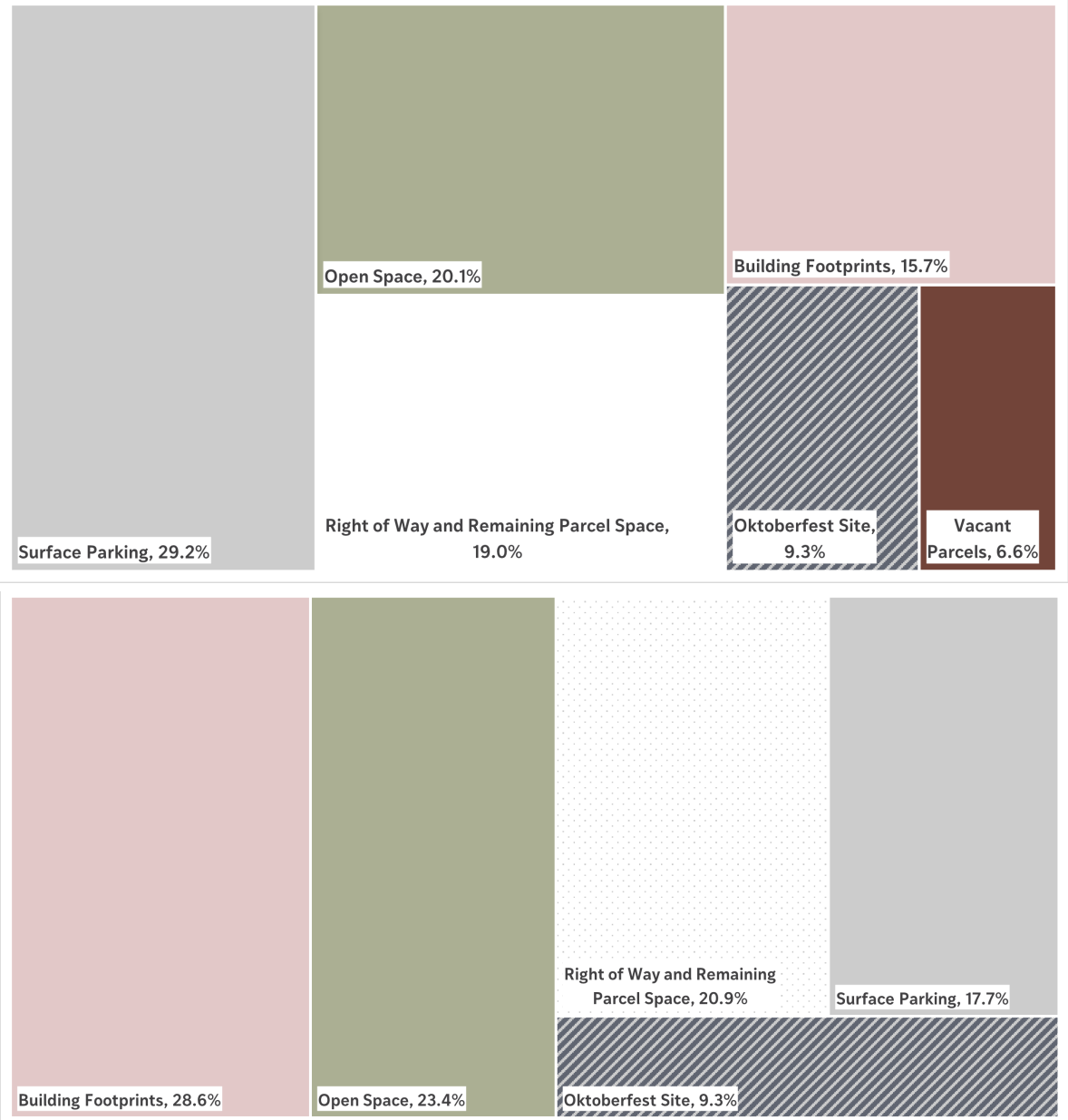
may be attributed to remaining parcel and terrace space.

Figure 33 illustrates the proposed land use data by percentage, while Table 11 compares the area of both existing and proposed land uses. While not visualized, it should be noted that the proposed building footprints in the study

Table 11: Comparison of Existing and Proposed Land Uses, by Acre.

Land Uses	Existing Area (Ac)	Proposed Area (Ac)	Difference (%)
Building Footprints	7.29	13.29	82.3%
Vacant Parcels	3.09	0	-100%
Oktoberfest Grounds	4.34	4.34	0%
Surface Parking	13.57	8.2	-39.3%
Open Space	9.34	10.89	17%
Right of Way and Remaining Parcel Space	8.85	9.73	10%
Total	46.48	46.48	

Figure 34: Percentages of Existing and Proposed Land Use in Study Area.



area concept are located outside of the 100-year floodplain.

Opportunity Sites

The study area concept includes a total of 30 properties, 19 of which are existing, and 11 of which are proposed. These buildings, along with key existing properties, are considered 'Opportunity Sites' for redevelopment or proposed improvements. A brief description of each opportunity site follows.

Site 1: Discovery Campus

The proposed Discovery Campus would occupy the vacant site currently owned by Xcel Energy at the corner of US-53 and 2nd Street North. The concepts shown in the above figures represent a planning-level interpretation of the 2023 Discovery Campus Overview document, which is summarized in the 'Previous Plans, Studies, and Reports' section. The campus would serve as a gateway to downtown from the north and house a variety of natural, cultural, and recreational activities, including the La Crosse County Historical Society Museum, the Great River Road Experience, the Dahl Auto Museum, and more.

It should be noted that the building footprint for the proposed Discovery Campus extends onto the existing city-owned Light and Power building (621 3rd Street North). Additional discussion between the City of La Crosse and Discovery Campus representatives will need to occur to determine if the Light and Power building is demolished or integrated into the overall footprint.

Proposed Use: Commercial, recreational and cultural

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 4; Goal 5.

Site 2: Oktoberfest Grounds

The Oktoberfest grounds are located directly west of the proposed Discovery Campus and south of the La Crosse River. The site, which is mostly paved with asphalt, includes six buildings which are used not only for the annual Oktoberfest event but also for administrative purposes.

The proposed improvements are rooted in stakeholder input and reflect a desire to invest in aesthetic improvements which would further distinguish the grounds. This includes constructing a landmark element to distinguish the site as a destination via a German-inspired clock tower to mark the entrance. Additional proposed improvements include replacing the chain link perimeter fencing with masonry and black metal fencing to enhance the curb appeal and to

Figure 35: Precedent Image of Masonry Fencing for Consideration at Oktoberfest Grounds, etc.



delineate the grounds from adjacent uses. An opportunity also lies within the grounds for adding a semi-permanent stage for musical or theater events to further activate the space year-round.

Proposed Use: Commercial

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 2

Site 3: Public Market

Previous plans and stakeholder discussions have underscored the desire to have a public market within the study area, particularly one that is close to the Oktoberfest grounds and could result in programming opportunities between both entities. The study area concept includes two possible locations for a public market, the first of which

Figure 36: Precedent Image of German Clock Tower as Inspiration for Oktoberfest Entrance.



could occupy the ca. 1914 portion of the Landmark By the Rivers building. This portion of the property, which is currently being used for parking and programming, would meet the square footage requirements outlined in the city's Public Market Site Analysis (2020). Locating within the existing building may fulfill two goals: providing space for the public market while filling underutilized space within the building. The feasibility of this site being used for a public market would require coordination between its property owner, the City of La Crosse, and adjacent property owners.

Proposed Use: Commercial

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 4

Site 4: Alternate Public Market

If agreements on the public market within the Landmark Building cannot be reached, the consultant team identified a second location for a public market upon the parking lot associated with 333 N. Front Street. This option would provide a standalone brick-and-mortar facility in close proximity to proposed mixed-use and residential properties, described below. A two-story structure on the proposed footprint would also meet the square footage requirements outlined in the city's Public Market Site Analysis (2020), which is roughly 30,000-35,000 square feet. This site has the added benefit of a path connection to Riverside Park in close proximity and could offer a nice connection between public park space and the market. The feasibility of this site being used for a public market would require coordination between its property owner, the City of La Crosse, and adjacent property owners. Given this site would mean new construction for a public market building and could be separately parceled, this gives an opportunity for a wholly City-owned market.

Proposed Use: Commercial

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 4

Site 5: Residential

This site currently consists of open space located to the east of Riverplace Apartments on the northern extent of the study area. The proposed building would be a three-story residential property totaling approximately 20,000 square feet. The property would be within steps of Riverside Park and nearby trails as well as a proposed dog park using existing green space to the north.

Proposed Use: Residential

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 4

Site 6: Mixed Use

This site is located directly east of the parking lot associated with 333 N. Front Street and currently consists of parking and landscaping. The proposed building would be a three-story, 60,000 square foot property, with commercial use(s) on the first floor and residential uses on the second and third floors. The property would be sited along the lot line facing Front Street and include an arched entry off of Front Street, providing access to both existing buildings and the Alternate Public Market.

Proposed Use: Residential, Commercial

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 3; Goal 4

Site 7: Mixed Use

This site is located on a parking lot located at the southwest corner of Landmark by the Rivers (429 2nd Street North). The proposed building would be a three story, 85,000 square foot property, with commercial (use)s on the first floor and residential uses on the second and third floors. Together with Sites 6 and 8, the properties would contribute to

a corridor feel along Front Street. Parking could be situated off the rear of the building as needed.

Proposed Use: Residential, Commercial

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 3; Goal 4 , Goal 5

Site 8: Mixed Use

This site is located on a parking lot associated with 333 N. Front Street as well as green space to the south. The proposed building would be a three-story, 90,000 square foot property, with commercial use(s) on the first floor and residential uses on the second and third floors. Similar to Site 6, the property would be sited along the lot line facing Front Street North and include an arched pass-through to connect to the existing path that aligns with Vine Street.

Proposed Use: Residential, Commercial

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 3; Goal 4

Site 9: Mixed Use

This site is located on 2nd Street North between Vine and State streets, which is currently being used for surface parking. The proposed building would be a four-story, 104,000 square foot property, with commercial use(s) on the first floor and residential uses on the 2nd-4th floors. The concept shows two primary facades on 2nd Street North as well as State Street, with parking in the rear of the property.

Proposed Use: Residential, Commercial

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 3; Goal 4

Site 10: Mixed Use

This site is located at the southwest corner of 2nd Street North and State Street and is currently being

used for surface parking. The proposed building would be a four story, 139,000 square foot property, with commercial use(s) on the first floor and residential uses on the 2nd-4th floors. Similar to Mixed Use 4, the concept shows two primary facades on 2nd Street North as well as State Street. The remainder of the site consists of existing surface parking.

Proposed Use: Residential, Commercial

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 3; Goal 4

Site 11: Commercial

This site is located on a parking lot at southwest corner of US-53 and La Crosse Street. The proposed building would be a two story, 25,000 square foot property, consisting exclusively of commercial uses.

Proposed Use: Commercial

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 3; Goal 4

Site 12: Commercial

This site is located on a parking lot associated with Landmark by the Rivers at the southwest corner of 2nd Street North and Pine Street. The proposed building would be a two story, mixed-use, 38,000 square foot property.

Proposed Use: Mixed-Use

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 3; Goal 4

Site 13: Multi-Family

This site represents the Chalmers Residences, which is a planned redevelopment located at 215 Pine Street and 401 3rd Street North. The developer proposes to construct a four-story, 228,000 square feet multifamily development that will take advantage of the lot formerly occupied by the La Crosse Tribune building. The proposed development, which will be conducted in three phases, will include one level of

Figure 37: Concept of the Discovery Campus. Source: Representative of Discovery Campus, Inc. The figure does not indicate a final design nor is it a construction document.



Figure 38: Rendering of The Chalmers Residences. Source: La Crosse Tribune.



underground parking, approximately 260 residential units and 5,500 square feet of commercial space. The underground parking will include 170 parking spaces, and the remaining parking demand will be met by the adjacent Pine Street ramp in which the development will lease approximately 120-160 stalls from the city. The development aligns with multiple goals outlined in adopted city plans including the city's Comprehensive Plan, which strongly emphasizes infill development.

The building footprint as shown in Figure 33 is for illustrative purposes only and may vary from the footprint as shown in developer materials.

Proposed Use: Residential, Commercial

Applicable Design Goals: Goal 1; Goal 4

Site 14: Dog Park

This site utilizes the remaining green space to the north for an additional dog park. There is a dog park south of this site, however space is limited. Additional facilities would be a benefit especially to the residences of new and proposed buildings.

Recommendation: Parking Lot Planters

Temporary planters installed between parking lots and sidewalks deliver a range of practical and aesthetic benefits. They beautify a space with greenery and visually 'soften' large sections of asphalt and concrete. They create a physical buffer that can help drivers perceive spatial boundaries, enhance pedestrian safety. Further, they can be repositioned or removed as needs change, all at a lower cost and with less maintenance than permanent infrastructure.

The precedent images illustrate tall, substantial planters, which is recommended in the study area due to the large amount of surface parking lots. Although each of the 18 surface parking lots in the study could benefit from the addition of temporary planters, the lots with frontage along city-owned streets including Front Street and 2nd Street could benefit the most. The planters could be placed on the city-owned

Figure 39: Precedent Image, Parking Lot Planters.



Figure 40: Precedent Image, Parking Lot Planters.



terrace and could help frame the street in the meantime.

Programming Opportunities

Oktoberfest staff have expressed interest in further activating their grounds not only during Oktoberfest but also year-round. This hinges on programming a variety of mutually reinforcing events. For example, a permanent beer hall could anchor daily foot traffic at a local and regional scale, while rotating museum exhibits from Discovery Campus next door can keep the narrative fresh for repeat visitors. During peak seasons, a nearby public market could expand into a curated vendor showcase. Food and beer options, among other things, would enhance the public market appeal and help turn the Oktoberfest grounds in a destination that complements rather than competes with the main festival.

Outside of Oktoberfest, the site becomes the natural trailhead for a regional cycling network. Way-finding kiosks, secure bike parking and pop-up repair stations encourage riders to explore the miles of connected paths, then return for refreshments.

Figure 41: Excerpt from US-53 Corridor Study Exhibit. Source: WisDOT



Roundabout Option

- ▶ Two-lane roundabout
- ▶ Shared-use path system to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian traffic
- ▶ Enhanced crosswalks for all approaches (Raised Crosswalks, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons, or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons).

The natural environment ties back to the potential exhibits within the Discovery Campus. Great River Trail-related events and bird-watching festivals, for example, could be staged simultaneously on both properties, creating larger-scale events that draw bigger crowds, lengthen stays, and reinforce the area as a must-visit cultural and recreational corridor.

Transportation

Proposed Facility Improvements

The study area concept retains its existing block structure and its existing right of way. No new roads are proposed, and the existing sidewalk network remains intact. Both city- and state-level capital improvements may occur along road segments within and around the study area, which could have implications for the phasing of redevelopment projects in select areas. This includes:

US-53: This roadway, which is located to the east of the study area, is the subject of a corridor study being conducted by WisDOT at the time of this

report. The purpose of the study is to develop alternatives that improve safety and address traffic operations concerns where practicable, while addressing existing and projected infrastructure needs through the design year (2050).

The study limits for the US-53 corridor are from WIS 35 to I-90 which is approximately 4.3 miles in length. The segment most relevant to the study area is from Division Street to the La Crosse River. The corridor study proposes two alternatives—Alternative 1, Alternative 2—and each have their own sub-alternative (1A, and 2A). WisDOT has selected Alternative 1 as the Recommended Alternative, which includes a variety of improvements related to traffic safety, traffic operations, bike and pedestrian access, pavement replacement, and utility repair/replacement. Notable improvements related to the study area include:

- Converting the intersection of US-53 and La Crosse Street to a two-lane roundabout, with a shared-use path system, enhanced crosswalks at all approaches, and pedestrian refuge islands;
- Bicycle facilities along both sides of the US-53 corridor, including a street-level bike lane or cycle track over the La Crosse River; and
- Installation of two Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) one at the north end of the US-53 bridge over the La Crosse river, and one midblock along northbound US-53 between Badger and Vine Streets.

Front Street North: The segment of Front Street North that is located in the study area is also within a 500-year floodplain, and flash flood events have occurred. The City of La Crosse 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan details the proposed regrade and reconstruction of Front Street North from Vine

Street to its termination at the north cul-de-sac. Such a project would not only help mitigate flash flooding by draining the storm water to the La Crosse River but would also include new curb, gutter, and pavement. This project is noted as an unfunded request with a timeline of 2027-2031.

It should be noted that the roundabout option in the first bullet above is considered a recommended option at the time of this report. The roundabout option would require property acquisition compared to the signalized alternative, and some changes to driveway access and parking facilities would occur. Should the intersection of US-53 and La Crosse be retained, the corridor study proposes a number of intersection improvements including new signal infrastructure and operation improvements, crosswalk and bike lane markings, and pedestrian refuge islands.

A Preferred Alternative will be selected in Winter 2026, followed by a signed environmental document.

Additionally, the study area concept retains all of the existing bicycle facilities as well as the proposed facilities recommended in the approved 2024 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update, including:

- Constructing a shared-use facility on Pine Street from 8th Street North to Front Street North;
- Adding a separated facility on La Crosse Street to 2nd Street North.

Figure 42 illustrates all existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities alongside proposed building and parking. Note that the map proposes extending the proposed separated bike facility on Vine Street one block to the west. This would further facilitate a comfortable ride that terminates at a prominent entrance to Riverside Park. It should be noted that Figure 42 does not illustrate a 'Festival Street' to between the Oktoberfest grounds and the ca. 1914 section of Landmark by the Rivers. While there is potential for a festival street to occur in the future,

Figure 42: Existing and Proposed Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities alongside Opportunity Sites. Source: 2024 La Crosse Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.



leaving the pavement as is can still facilitate programming between both sites for Oktoberfest and other potential activities.

Parking

The study area concept maintains existing on-street parking and includes 17 off-street parking facilities, of which 15 are surface parking lots located in the study area and two are city-owned parking ramps just outside the study area. The repurposing of some of these facilities for development results in a reduction of surface parking area from 15.4 acres to 10.8 acres, or nearly 35 percent. In turn, this results in a reduction in the number of parking spaces from 2,543 (193 on-street, 2,350 off-street) to 2,081, or 18 percent. Table 12 compares area by square footage and acreage as well as estimated parking spaces for both the existing study area and the proposed concept.

The estimated number of parking spaces for the study area concept was based on the following assumptions and guidance:

- Existing parking facilities that remain unaltered in the proposed concept maintain their estimated number of spaces, which is documented in the Existing Conditions section. These estimates were calculated using a desktop survey and data from the 2020 Downtown Parking Study. It is important to note that the counts from the desktop survey are estimates. Pavement markings for each space can be faded or obscured by parked vehicles, which may affect the total count.
- The estimated parking spaces for proposed parking facilities—new facilities and altered facilities due to a building development—are based on the following assumptions: 160 square feet for each parking space, and

Table 12: Comparison of Proposed and Existing Parking, On- and Off- Street.

Area (SF)		Area (Ac)		Parking Spaces (On- and Off-Street)	
Proposed:	439,485	Proposed:	10.08	Proposed, Total:	2,081
Existing:	671,732	Existing:	15.42	Existing, Total:	2,543
Difference:	(232,247)	Difference:	(5.34)	Difference:	(462)
%	-32.57%	%	-34.62%	%	-18.1%

a set-aside of 40 percent for circulation and landscaping within each facility.

- The proposed redevelopments in the previous section do not include a set-aside for minimum parking. This is in accordance with Ordinance No. 5317 (Adopted 12/21/24), which eliminates off-street parking requirements in all zoning districts.
- The estimate does not include the indoor parking spaces associated with RiverPlace Apartments, Landmark by the Rivers, and 333 Front Street.
- On-street parking spaces maintain their estimated number of spaces as documented in the Existing Conditions section.

The 2020 Downtown Parking Study includes a 5- and 10-year surplus/deficit forecasts of blocks in and around the study area. With the exception of Block 16a (10 Harborview Place, deficit of 5 spaces) and 35a (which includes 333 Front Street North and GrandStay Hotel, deficit of 16 spaces), each block estimates a parking surplus which results in a total surplus of 1,049 spaces over a ten-year forecast from the time of the study (2021-2031). This estimated surplus could absorb the estimated loss of 462 parking spaces noted above by the proposed

development; however, there would remain a surplus of 587 parking spaces. It is important to note:

- This estimate does not calculate potential parking needs associated with the Discovery Campus project.
- This estimate does not incorporate the parking associated with The Chalmers Residences (Site 13), which consists of 170 underground parking spaces and 120-160 leased spaces from the Pine Street Ramp. If incorporated, it would result in a surplus of 427-467 spaces.

The estimated surplus of 1,049 spaces over the 2021-2031 time period could absorb the potential loss of 462 parking spaces indicated by the redevelopment concept plan, leaving a surplus of 587 parking spaces.

- It is unknown whether or not the consultant associated with the 2020 Downtown Parking Study included indoor parking spaces into the forecast, which could absorb demand at their respective source.

Housing Demand

Many of the proposed buildings within the study area include residential space. The La Crosse Housing Study conducted in 2024 recommended up to 116 rental units be constructed per year for a total of 466 rental units by 2030. Of the eighteen neighborhoods identified as opportunity areas for residential development, only the downtown neighborhood was explicitly identified for medium to high density development.

Table 13: Proposed Residential Units by Property Name

Property Name	Proposed Residential Units
Site 5: Residential (next to Riverplace Apartments)	17
Site 6: Mixed-Use (next to 'alternate public market')	33
Site 7: Mixed-Use (NE corner of Front St and 'bike/ped access)	46
Site 8: Mixed-Use (NW corner of Front St by Vine St)	50
Site 9: Mixed-Use (SW corner of 2nd and Vine St)	64
Site 10: Mixed-Use (SW corner of 2nd and State)	85
Site 12: Mixed-Use (SW corner of 2nd and Pine St)	10
Site 13: Multi-Family (The Chalmers Residences first two phases)	181
Total	486
Note: The Chalmers Residences has been approved by the Plan Commission and has a development agreement in place for all three phases. The number of units for the other properties is an estimate only based on the identified assumptions which are subject to change.	

Table 13 illustrates the approximate number of units by property name within the study area and timing of potential development. This information is based on the proposed building square foot (SF) footprint, number of residential stories, and assuming the average unit is 980 SF and approximately 20% of the building SF is for circulation.

Business Demand

Given the direction of plans for La Crosse as a whole, the downtown in general, data gathered to-date, and stakeholder input regarding desired uses within the study area, a void analysis of the types of retail, food, office, and medical office was conducted using Placer.ai. (Placer.ai is a location analytics provider that analyzes locations or geographic areas by audience type.)

Analysis identifies the most compatible retail tenants for a specific vacant space that is the best fit for the property and its surrounding market, whether it is a part of a shopping center, standalone building, or even an undeveloped parcel of land. Using a blend of demographic data, retail behavior, and tenant performance, the list of suitable retailers are also given a Relative Fit Score—a score that reflects how well that tenant aligns with the property’s characteristics and market conditions. (More information about the Relative Fit Score may be found in the appendix.)

The following tables are intended to demonstrate the types of potential tenants the site could attract, and the amount of space required for the tenant. The examples provided are not recommendations of specific tenants, but a sample of the type of establishments that may be successful.

Void

Table 14: Up to 5,000 Tenant Space

Potential Tenants	Sub Category	Min Size	Max Size	Relative Fit Score	Avg. Monthly FT
Royal Tobacco	Smoke Shop	2,178	2,178	100.01	10,247
Bluff View Bank	Bank	3,946	3,946	100.01	1,511
Buck's Bar & Grill	Bar	N/A	N/A	100.01	1,724
Bonnie Rae's Cafe	Cafe	4,069	4,069	97.02	2,136
First Choice Dental	Dentist's Office	2,565	12,060	N/A	1,248

Filters:

Expansion Rate National Level:	High Growth (>30%), Slow Growth (>10%)
Expansion Rate State Level:	High Growth (>30%), Slow Growth (>10%)
Exclude Chains with Missing Data:	FALSE
Chain Operate in State:	FALSE
Nearest Location (mi):	2 - 150
Space Size (sq ft):	564.31 - 5000
Category & Sub-category:	Beauty & Spa; Bike Shop; Sporting Goods Shop; Fitness; Electronic Stores; Clothing; Stores & Services; Fashion Accessories; Attractions; Pet Stores & Services; Hobbies, Gifts & Crafts; Drugstores and Pharmacies Breakfast, Coffee, Bakeries & Dessert Shops; Restaurants; Bars & Pubs; Groceries
	Doctor and Health Professional Offices, Home Health Care and Supply Banks & Financial Services, Workplace

Table 15: 5,000-10,000 SF Tenant Space

Potential Tenants	Sub Category	Min Size	Max Size	Relative Fit Score	Avg. Monthly FT
Audio Designs	Electronics Store	N/A	N/A	100.0	2,017
Shari's Sports Saloon & Lanes	Bowling Alley	5,681	5,681	96.2	2,689
Falls Florist & Greenhouse	Flower Shop	N/A	N/A	95.6	1,556
Buck's Bar & Grill	Bar	N/A	N/A	100.01	1,724
Pioneer Club	Bar	7,441	7,441	98.9	2,554
Altra Federal Credit Union Winona Branch	Bank	7,866	7,866	100.0	9,056

Filters:

Expansion Rate National Level:	High Growth (>30%), Slow Growth (>10%)
Expansion Rate State Level:	High Growth (>30%), Slow Growth (>10%)
Exclude Chains with Missing Data:	FALSE
Chain Operate in State:	FALSE
Nearest Location (mi):	2 - 150
Space Size (sq ft):	564.31 - 5000
Category & Sub-category:	Bike Shop; Sporting Goods Shop; Clothing; Stop & Service; Toy / Game Store; Fitness; Attractions; Pet Stores & Services; Hobbies, Gifts & Crafts; Electronic Stores Breakfast, Coffee, Bakeries & Dessert Shops; Restaurants; Bars & Pubs; Groceries
	Doctor and Health Professional Offices, Home Health Care and Supply Banks & Financial Services, Workplace

Table 16: 10,001-20,000 Tenant Space

Potential Tenants	Sub Category	Min Size	Max Size	Relative Fit Score	Avg. Monthly FT
Iron Bluff Fitness	Gym / Fitness Center	18,548	18,548	100.01	3,350
Winona Feed Seed & More	Pet Store	12,627	12,627	99.27	1,209
B&B Olympic Bowl	Bowling Alley	12,232	12,232	99.07	9,061
Companion Animal Care Center	Veterinarian	10,448	10,448	98.92	2,445
Audio Designs	Electronics Store	N/A	N/A	97.24	2,017
Buck's Bar & Grill	Bar	N/A	N/A	100.01	1,724
First Choice Dental	Dentist's Office	2,565	12,060	N/A	1,248
Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare	Medical Centers	14,205	14,205	N/A	1,741
WCCU Credit Union	Credit Union	N/A	N/A	100.01	7,738

Table 17: 20,001-45,000 SF Tenant Space

Potential Tenants	Sub Category	Min Size	Max Size	Relative Fit Score	Avg. Monthly FT
Audio Designs	Electronics Store	N/A	N/A	100.0	2,017
Falls Florist & Greenhouse	Flower Shop	N/A	N/A	96.2	1,556
Midtown Foods	Grocery Store	23,982	23,982	100.0	35,595
Buck's Bar & Grill	Bar	N/A	N/A	96.8	1,724
WNB Financial	Bank	23,339	23,339	100.0	8,345
Krohn Clinic	Medical Centers	28,985	28,985	100.0	7,400
Grifols Plasma	Blood Center	4,341	24,413	96.8	4,650

Filters:

Expansion Rate National Level:	High Growth (>30%), Slow Growth (>10%)
Expansion Rate State Level:	High Growth (>30%), Slow Growth (>10%)
Exclude Chains with Missing Data:	FALSE
Chain Operate in State:	FALSE
Nearest Location (mi):	2 - 150
Space Size (sq ft):	10001 - 20000
Category & Sub-category:	Bike Shop; Sporting Goods Shop; Clothing; Attractions; Fitness; Pet Stores & Services; Hobbies, Gifts & Crafts; Electronic Stores
	Groceries; Restaurants; Bars & Pubs; Breakfast, Coffee, Bakeries & Dessert Shops
	Doctor and Health Professional Offices, General Medical Centers and Hospitals
	Real Estate Office; Banks & Financial Services

Filters:

Space Size (sq ft):	20001 - 45000
Nearest Location (mi):	0.52 - 150
Category & Sub-category:	Home Improvement, Furniture and Home Furnishings + 15
Expansion Rate State Level:	High Growth (>30%), Slow Growth (>10%)
Expansion Rate National Level:	High Growth (>30%), Slow Growth (>10%)
Chains:	Boot Barn; Sierra; Going, Going, Gone; Shoe Station; Crunch Fitness; Puttshack; Wesco Home Furnishings; Quilt Corner; Dairyland Power Cooperative; Falls Florist & Greenhouse; Hillside Animal Hospital; Minnesota Marine; Johnson's One Stop; Audio Designs; Wisconsin Cranberry Museum; West Salem Veterinary Clinic; Gundersen Pharmacy; Olive Juice Quilts; County Market and Hometown Hardware; Leon Community Club; Township Bowl; Wisconsin Building Supply; Be Fit; Wazee Sports Center; Unity Fitness La Crosse; St Charles Veterinary Clinic; Milt Lunda Memorial Arena; Harmony Veterinary Clinic; Wood Sales & Services; All Star Lanes; New Generations of Harmony Antique Mall; Christen Farm Nursery
	Groceries; Bars & Pubs; Restaurants; Breakfast, Coffee, Bakeries & Dessert Shops
	Banks & Financial Services; Office Supplies; Workplace
	Medical Laboratories, General Medical Centers and Hospitals
	Banks & Financial Services, Workplace

Implementation

The purpose of the Implementation Strategy is to apply each of the goals listed in the previous section, pressing them into a series of actions to help realize the study area concepts. All actions have been organized under the following topics:

- Coordination and Programming
- Development and Redevelopment
- Transportation and Public Realm

Timeline

Each action is assigned one of the following time ranges:

- Ongoing
- 1-3 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-10 years

Cost Estimate

Each action is given a 'low' (\$), 'medium', (\$\$) 'high' (\$\$\$), or 'staff time estimate'.

Lead Agent, Partners

Each action is assigned to a lead agent who would be responsible for executing a given task. A list of potential partners is also provide. All lead agents and partners are given one of the following acronyms:

- HPC Heritage Preservation Commission
- DMI Downtown Mainstreet, Inc.
- DNA Downtown Neighborhood Association
- CPC City Plan Commission
- CCD Committee for Citizens with Disabilities
- COL City of La Crosse (General)
- DPW Department of Public Works, City of La Crosse
- DPD Department of Planning and Development
- LFD La Crosse Fire Department
- LPD La Crosse Police Department
- MTU La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility

- DOT Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- OCP Other Community Partners: Educational and religious institutions, foundations, civic organizations, other preservation advocates at the local, regional, state, and national levels.
- LCC La Crosse County
- LCCHS La Crosse County Historical Society
- NG Neighborhood Groups
- LADCO La Crosse Area Development Corporation
- LCCVF La Crosse City Vision Foundation
- PO Property Owners
- RED Real Estate Developers
- BO Business Owners

Priority

Each action is assigned a priority level ranging from 'low' to 'high'.

Coordination and Programming Recommendations

	Action	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Lead Agent	Partners	Priority
1.1	Initiate city-led discussion with property owners to discuss next steps and implications for parcel redevelopment.	1-3 years	Staff Time	DMI	DPD, PO	High
1.2	Hold annual property owner coordination and discussion meetings.	3-5 years	Staff Time	DMI	DPD, PO	Medium
1.3	Host semi-annual meetings with Downtown Stakeholders and Discovery Campus project leaders as they proceed with their development.	3-5 years	Staff Time	DMI	HPC, LCCHS, DPD, DNA, RED, BO, PO	Medium
1.4	Coordinate with Oktoberfest for opportunities to expand their brand and business within the study area, via a museum, bar, or office presence.	3-5 years	Staff Time	BO	BO, PO, DMI, DNA	Medium
1.5	Review the study area boundaries, integrate into the downtown district, then formalize.	1-3 years	Staff Time	DPD	DMI, DNA	Low
1.6	Create a brand identity for the study area. The identity should encompass the downtown, representing an expanded yet cohesive district.	3-5 years	\$	DMI	DNA, PO, BO	Low
1.7	Incorporate the study area assets into downtown-specific wayfinding materials, maps, apps, and more.	3-5 years	\$	DPD	DMI, DNA	Medium
1.8	Work with Oktoberfest and adjacent property owners to ensure maximum flexibility for programming, activities, and furnishings.	1-3 years	Staff Time	DPD	PO	Medium
1.9	Work with Downtown Mainstreet to 'test' events (existing or new) that expand from downtown into the study area.	Ongoing	Staff Time	DPD	DMI	Medium
1.10	Increase opportunities for families to enjoy low-cost activities in/around the study area. This can be done in tandem with downtown events.	Ongoing	Staff Time	DPD	DMI	Medium
1.11	Coordinate with property owners and Parks, Rec, and Forestry Dept on new dog park.	1-3 years	\$	DPD	PRF, Current property owners	Low

Development and Redevelopment Recommendations

	Action	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Lead Agent	Partners	Priority
2.1	Pursue a phased strategy for redevelopment. Meet with property owners and move forward with willing owners, matching with developers if necessary.	1-3 years	Staff time	DPD	PO, RED	High
2.2	Coordinate with Discovery Center to understand timeline and ways City of La Crosse may provide technical support..	1-3 years	Staff time	DPD	PO, DPD	Medium
2.3	Guide groundfloor uses to activate public space.	Ongoing	Staff time	DPD	DMI	Low
2.4	Encourage zero lot line siting to promote an intact street face.	Ongoing	Staff time	DPD	CPC	Medium
2.5	Determine height maximum and step back requirements for upper stories.	Ongoing	Staff time	DPD	CPC	Medium
2.6	Establish minimum amount of glazing and/or transparency for ground floor facades.	Ongoing	Staff time	DPD	CPC	Medium
2.7	Establish minimum amount of retail space required for mixed-use buildings (ex: min. depth 30-45 ft; min. length 50% street facing length; min. transparency 50% of facade transparent).	Ongoing	Staff time	DPD	CPC	Medium

Development and Redevelopment Recommendations (continued)

	Action	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Lead Agent	Partners	Priority
2.8	Define building materials, minimum expectations and design guidelines for different facades.	Ongoing	Staff time	DPD	PCP	Medium
2.9	Support interim solutions with low-cost pilot projects prior to full execution of infrastructure projects.	3-5 years		DPD	DPW	Low
2.10	Implement Public Market Plan for one of two identified sites in study area; start with negotiations for space usage.	1-3 years	\$\$\$	DPD	DMI, DNA, NG	High
2.11	Offer relocation assistance to businesses interesting in moving into study area, or expanding.	3-5 years	\$\$	DPD	DMI	Medium
2.12	Update the zoning code to require mixed-use properties in the study area provide bicycle accommodations, including bike parking stalls, bike storage lockers, bike work/repair stations, e-bike charging stations.	Ongoing	Staff time	DPD	COL	Low
2.13	Encourage planned developments to add visually engaging elements to construction fencing, such as murals or renderings.	Ongoing	Staff time	DPD	CPC	Low
2.14	Rezone the former Xcel Energy site from M-2 (Industrial) to C-2 (Commercial).	3-5 years	Staff Time	DPD	PO, CPC	Medium

Transportation and Public Realm Recommendations

	Action	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Lead Agent	Partners	Priority
3.1	Add district-specific banners to street lighting.	1-3 years	\$	COL, DPW	DMI	Low
3.2	Add flower baskets to street lighting.	1-3 years	\$	COL, DPW	DMI	High
3.3	Invest in public realm enhancement like landscaping, parking lot screening, and flexible furnishings that improve the pedestrian experience.	3-5 years	\$	COL, DPW	DMI, PO, BO, OCP	Medium
3.4	Integrate public art into the study area through events, amenities, and infrastructure. Use public art to celebrate the unique qualities of the district - its history, people, industry, etc.	3-5 years	\$	OCP	DMI, DNA	Medium
3.5	Install flower planters adjacent to large parking lots, especially lots facing city-owned streets where there is no delineation between sidewalk and parking lot.. Key sections include Front Street next to the Freighthouse, Vine Street west of La Crosse Distilling. Can use the existing planter design used primarily on Front Street.	1-3 years	\$	COL, DPW	DMI, PO, BO, OCP	High
3.6	Deploy traffic-calming devices to lower vehicle speeds and minimize conflicts with pedestrians, cyclists, and other modes.	3-5 years	\$	COL, DPW	MTU, LFD, LPD	Medium
3.7	Implement bump-outs, medians, and other pedestrian safety measures where appropriate. Can be done concurrently with other planned capital improvements and/or with redevelopment projects.	3-5 years	\$	COL, DPW	MTU, LFD, LPD	Medium

Transportation and Public Realm Recommendations (continued)

	Action	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Lead Agent	Partners	Priority
3.8	Review the ADA Transition Plan for potential improvements concurrent with other capital improvements.	Ongoing	Staff Time	COL, DPW	CPC, CCD	Low
3.9	Increase safety and visibility to key multimodal intersections (e.g. Pine and 2nd) by painting crosswalks or constructing a temporary raised crosswalk.	1-3 years	\$	COL, DPW	OCP, DMI, DNA, CPC, CCD, OCP	Medium
3.11	Conduct a walkshed analysis to estimate origin-destination walk times, from parking facilities to destinations.	3-5 years	\$	COL, DPD		Low
3.12	Construct a shared-use facility on Pine Street, which would terminate on Front Street North. This is a recommendation from the 2024 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.	3-5 years	\$	COL, DPW, DPD		Medium
3.13	Construct a separated bicycle facility on Vine Street which would terminate on Front Street North. This is a recommendation from the 2024 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.	3-5 years	\$	COL, DPW, DPD		Medium
3.14	Work with WisDOT to include Leading Pedestrian Intervals for pedestrian crossing facilities at signalized intersections along US-53.	1-3 years	Staff Time	COL, DPD	DOT	Low

Transportation and Public Realm Recommendations (continued)

	Action	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Lead Agent	Partners	Priority
3.15	Coordinate with WisDOT on US-53 alternatives, particularly the roundabout option. Ensure that the roundabout design includes dedicated bicycle facilities.	1-3 years	Staff Time	COL, DPD	DOT	Medium
3.16	Upgrade the 2nd Street cycle track to a protected bike lane with concrete curbs.	3-5 years	\$	COL, DPW, DPD	PO, BO	Low
3.17	Issue a RFP for an update to the 2020 Downtown Parking Study. The study should include updated inventory and utilization data--including indoor/underground parking--and could incorporate the opportunity sites from this report into 5- and 10-year forecasts.	3-5 years	\$	COL, DPD	DMI, PO, RED	Medium
3.18	Ensure master plans for proposed developments shift all residential parking entries and commercial loading zones to the rear or sides of buildings, keeping them well away from public plazas, sidewalks, and multi-use paths to reduce conflicts with foot traffic.	5-10 years	Staff Time	COL, DPD	RED	Low
3.19	Consider upgrading signed bus stops with bus shelters where right of way is available.	3-5 years	\$	MTU	DOT, COL	Low
3.20	Consider adding or moving a Drift Cycle station to one of the parking ramps to encourage a 'park once' strategy.	1-3 years	\$	COL	LCC	Low
3.21	Coordinate Planning and Public Works Departments regarding the proposed Front Street North reconstruction. Ensure opportunity site placement and proposed phasing align with scope.	3-5 years	Staff Time	COL, DPW, DPD	RED, PO, BO	High
3.22	Work with WisDOT to ensure trail connectivity from the La Crosse bridge is noted in the Preferred Alternative.	3-5 years	Staff Time	COL, DPD	DOT	Medium

Appendix

ESRI Tapestry Segmentation



LifeMode Group: Midtown Singles **Set to Impress**

11D

Households: 1,714,100

Average Household Size: 2.12

Median Age: 33.9

Median Household Income: \$32,800

WHO ARE WE?

Set to Impress is depicted by medium to large multiunit apartments with lower than average rents. These apartments are often nestled into neighborhoods with other businesses or single-family housing. Nearly one in three residents is 20 to 34 years old, and a large portion are single-person nonfamily households. Although many residents live alone, they preserve close connections with their family. Many work in food service while they are attending college. This group is always looking for a deal. They are very conscious of their image and seek to bolster their status with the latest fashion. *Set to Impress* residents are tapped into popular music and the local music scene.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Apartment complexes represented by multiple multiunit structures are often nestled in neighborhoods with either single-family homes or other businesses.
- Renters make up nearly three quarters of all households.
- Mostly found in urban areas, but also in suburbs.
- Single-person households make up over 40% of all households.
- It is easy enough to walk or bike to work for many residents.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Residents are educated and mobile.
- Many are enrolled in college (Index 141).
- Consumers always have an eye out for a sale and will stock up when the price is right.
- Prefer name brands, but buy generic when it is a better deal.
- Quick meals on the run are a reality of life.
- Image-conscious consumers that dress to impress and often make impulse buys.
- Maintain close relationships with family.



LifeMode Group: Scholars and Patriots College Towns

14B

Households: 1,176,200

Average Household Size: 2.14

Median Age: 24.5

Median Household Income: \$32,200

WHO ARE WE?

About half the residents of *College Towns* are enrolled in college, while the rest work for a college or the services that support it. Students have busy schedules, but make time between studying and part-time jobs for socializing and sports. Students that are new to managing their own finances tend to make impulse buys and splurge on the latest fashions. This digitally engaged group uses computers and cell phones for all aspects of life including shopping, schoolwork, news, social media, and entertainment. *College Towns* residents are all about new experiences, and they seek out variety and adventure in their lives.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- These are nonfamily households with many students living alone or with roommates for the first time.
- This segment is a mix of densely developed student housing and dorms with local residences.
- Off-campus, low-rent apartments comprise half of the housing stock.
- Over three-quarters of the households are renter occupied, with one in ten remaining vacant.
- One-third of homes are single family; mostly occupied by local residents who own their homes.
- This market is bike and pedestrian friendly.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Limited incomes result in thrifty purchases.
- Dress to impress with the latest fashions of the season.
- Strong preference for environmentally friendly products and vehicles that get good gas mileage.
- Heavily influenced by celebrity endorsements and trends in magazines.
- Most feel anything that can be done online is easier than in person.



Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.



LifeMode Group: GenXurban

Rustbelt Traditions

5D

Households: 2,716,800

Average Household Size: 2.47

Median Age: 39.0

Median Household Income: \$51,800

WHO ARE WE?

The backbone of older industrial cities in states surrounding the Great Lakes, *Rustbelt Traditions* residents are a mix of married-couple families and singles living in older developments of single-family homes. While varied, the workforce is primarily white collar, with a higher concentration of skilled workers in manufacturing, retail trade, and health care. *Rustbelt Traditions* represents a large market of stable, hardworking consumers with modest incomes but an average net worth of nearly \$400,000. Family oriented, they value time spent at home. Most have lived, worked, and played in the same area for years.



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Almost half (46%) of the households are married-couple families, similar to the US (48%), most without children (also similar to the US); the slightly higher proportion of singles (Index 105) reflects the aging of the population.
- Average household size is slightly lower at 2.47.
- They are movers, slightly more mobile than the US population (Index 109), but over 70% of householders moved into their current homes before 2010.
- Most residents live in modest, single-family homes in older neighborhoods built in the 1950s (Index 224).
- Nearly three quarters own their homes; nearly half of households have mortgages.
- A large and growing market, *Rustbelt Traditions* residents are located in the dense urban fringe of metropolitan areas throughout the Midwest and South.
- Most households have one to two vehicles available.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Most have graduated from high school or spent some time at a college or university.
- Labor force participation slightly higher than the US at 67%.
- While most income is derived from wages and salaries, nearly 31% of households collect Social Security and nearly 20% draw income from retirement accounts.
- Family-oriented consumers who value time spent at home.
- Most have lived, worked, and played in the same area for years.
- Budget-aware shoppers that favor American-made products.
- Read newspapers, especially the Sunday editions.

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

Placer.ai Relative Fit Score

The Relative Fit Score is listed in the 'Business Demand' section of the Study Area Concepts section. The score is calculated using four distinct parameters that measure key variables and property attributes:

- **Demographic Fit Score (DFS):** Measures how well a prospective tenant fits the demographic profile of the property. By default, the score is calculated using 3 demographic attributes: household income, education, and ethnicity (which can be adjusted). The DFS is an average of the score given to each of these attributes, see "Match Analysis" for more details. The min/max scale represents the values of the prospective tenant with the lowest and highest DFS scores out of all the potential tenants in the list.
- **Average Monthly Visits:** Shows the average number of visits to a single tenant location, nationwide. Average monthly visits are based on the estimated number of visits measured by Placer.ai. The min/max scale represents the values of the prospective tenants with the lowest and highest DFS scores out of all the potential tenants in the list.
- **Frequent Co-Tenants:** Shows the number of retail chains that are frequently located near locations of the potential tenant. These shared locations are counted and determine a score. The min/max scale represents the values of the potential tenants with the lowest and highest Frequent Co-Tenants score out of all the tenants proposed in the list. By default, Placer.ai requires the chain to be represented in over 30% of the tenant's

total locations to be counted as a "frequent co-tenant."

- **Cannibalization:** Prospects of cannibalization strongly hint at the potential tenant's customer churn rate among existing stores (should a new tenant store open at the given property). In the diagram, the shared zone between the two circles represents the potential population overlap between the (i) property and a (ii) tenant's locations within 50 miles. We calculate this overlap as a percentage. 100% implies full cannibalization risk while 0% implies no cannibalization risk.

