

The Concept Plan

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

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

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



Protecting wooded coulee hillsides from development impacts is an important goal

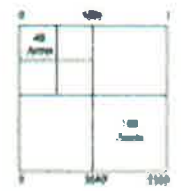
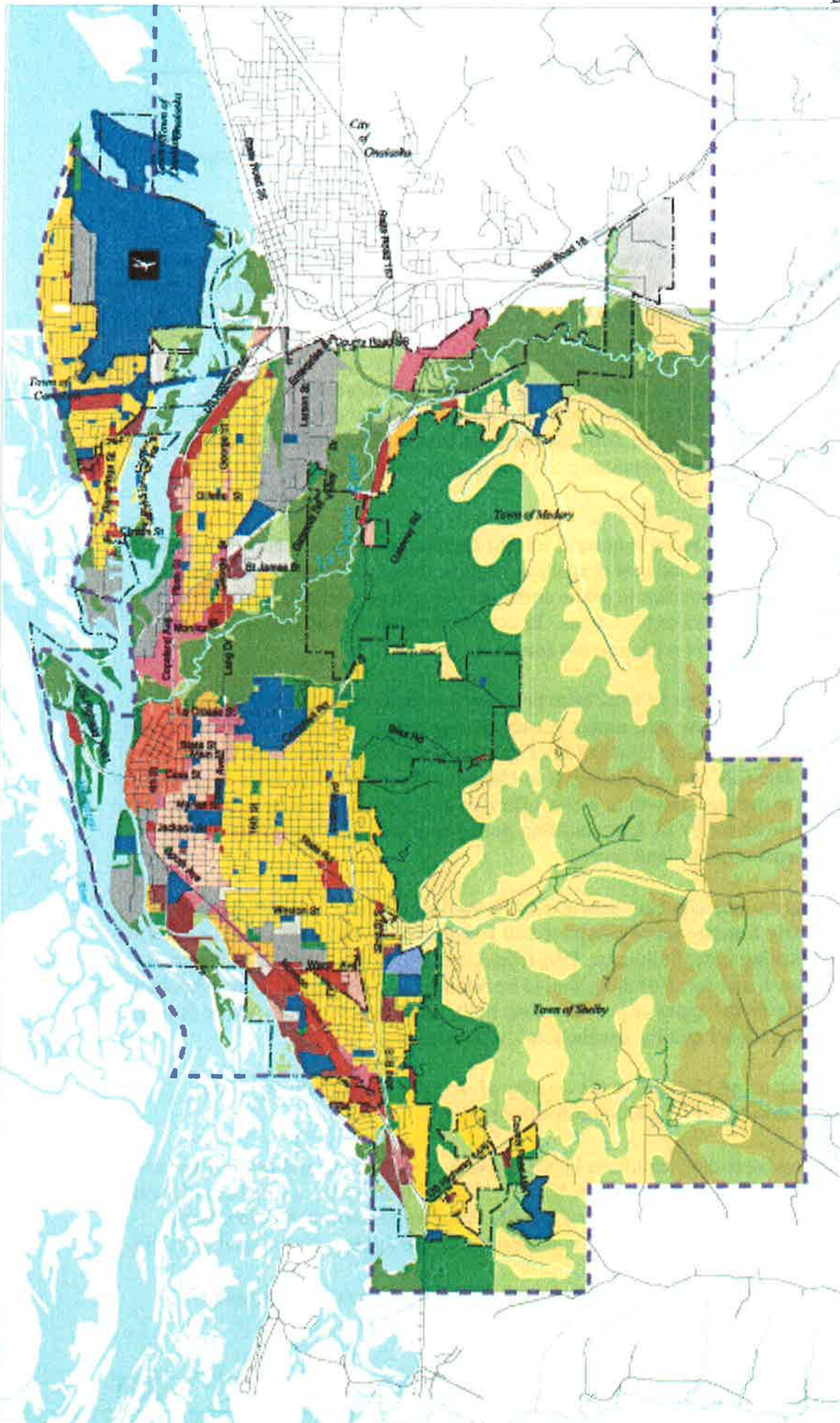
Principles and Priorities: The Concept Plan guided the preparation of the comprehensive plan in the following ways:

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

Figure 4-1

Future Land Use

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



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