



Board of Park Commissioners

Goal: To define the proposed La Crosse Center building expansion limits and its relationship with Riverside Park and to gain approval to continue design efforts.

Based on recent meetings with City of La Crosse Officials, La Crosse Center Board Members, the La Crosse community, and Park Board Commissioners, a proposed conceptual design has been developed for the La Crosse Center Expansion that includes extending the building into a portion of Riverside Park. With approval from the City of La Crosse and the La Crosse Center Board, the next step is approval from the Board of Park Commissioners. This will allow the design team to continue conceptual planning efforts, identify proposed limits of park engagement areas associated with the new building expansion, and agree to the general footprint of the proposed "River Lobby" (the portion of the Center that physically touches down within the Park boundary and provides access to and from the Center to the Park) and convention center addition overhang area. This expansion approach will allow enhancement and expansion of functions to the La Crosse Center and Riverside Park. If approved, the team will resume work to further develop the proposed expansion and facilitate collaboration with the park & rec, planning, utility, and engineering departments within the City of La Crosse. The design team will make periodic presentations at key milestones within the design to process to the Board of Park Commissioners for further input, and to answer any questions that may arise. As progress to the design is made, review of the landscape, hardscape, material, colors, and other aesthetics will also be presented for input from the Board. The design team, the La Crosse Center Board, and the community have reviewed several options prior to the current preferred option, including an option to build over the Pearl Street Walkway. The current preferred option was arrived at after thoroughly examining the expansion functional and operational needs, site constraints, and community input.

Brief History:

In early 2017, the design team of ISG + Gensler were selected. Early on, many discussions took place with the La Crosse Center Board and staff members to develop a priority list of needs. On May 9th and 10th, 2017 visioning sessions were held with city leaders and the general public to discover their needs, ideas and goals for this project. In June 2017 the design team presented eight options for the location of the convention center addition. At a La Crosse Center Board Meeting, the Board narrowed the options down to two: Concept 1A which proposed to build the new ball room addition above North Hall & the Pearl Street walkway and Concept 2 which proposed to build the new ball room addition to the west and into Riverside Park. Based on the direction received, the design team further developed these two concepts over the next few months. In September 2017 a public input meeting was held to discuss the two options. There was strong opposition to Scheme 1A due to concerns that it would block off the Pearl Street walkway between Riverside Park and Downtown La Crosse. In November 2017 a presentation was given to the City of La Crosse Common Council regarding each Concept and associated cost estimates. The options included Concept 1 which was previously named 1A and three options of Concept 2 (B, B1 and B2). After this meeting, Gensler was asked to develop an Economic Impact Study to compare the three options of Scheme 2. Scheme 1 was not further developed due to public input and high per-unit cost associated with the complexities of constructing a new building over an existing building. An Economic Impact Study was presented to the La Crosse Center Board and City of La Crosse Common Council in December 2017. Scheme B1, which is what the current design is based, was viewed to be the best option due to an Annual Economic Impact of \$12.1M, an estimated 150+ new jobs and an

estimated 18,000 to 22,000 new annual visitors to the La Crosse Center. This option had a lower initial cost compared to Concept B while still having a better economic impact compared to Concept B2. At the January 17th, 2018 La Crosse Center Board Meeting the board voted unanimously in favor of the design team moving forward with Concept B1.

The ballroom expansion being elevated above the ground level is an important design component. It allows the ballroom expansion to have separate circulation routes than the existing arena so there can be two events going on at the same time. Also, the Concept B1 locates the ballrooms on the west side of the existing arena. The ballrooms have specific length to width ratios that make them most efficient and sellable. Adjacent to the ballrooms on the east side (between the ballrooms and the existing arena) will be the back of house area, which includes a food service area and necessary storage. On the west side of the ballroom is the lobby space which has specific size requirements to allow necessary pre-event functions to take place. This allows the ballroom to be split into three smaller ballrooms for smaller events, while allowing all events to have access to the lobby and balcony space with beautiful views to Riverside Park, Mississippi River and beyond.

Benefits of the request:

Expansion of the La Crosse Center is essential to not only retain current convention events, but to attract additional events that will add new revenue and jobs to the local economy. Engaging and enhancing the Park can add value to the park experience and create a greater connection. With the La Crosse Center's adjacency to the Mississippi River and Riverside Park the La Crosse community has a rare and unique opportunity to connect event and river guests between two wonderful amenities as well as make a building that is traditionally used by event or out of town guests available to regular park users.

Request:

Approval to continue design efforts, identify proposed limits of park engagement areas associated with the new building expansion, and agree to the general footprint of the proposed "River Lobby" (the portion of the Center that physically touches down within the Park boundary and provides access to and from the Center to the Park) and convention center addition overhang area.