

From: Kevin Hundt <kevinhundt0@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 26, 2025 1:15 PM
To: ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: Re: Comment on 25-1251

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Overall, this plan is a step in the right direction, with an emphasis on high density and walkability/bikeability. I have several suggestions and concerns.

1. There needs to be a connection from the south-west corner of Copeland Ave bridge to the bike/ped path below it. Currently there are connections between the bike/ped paths and the sidewalk at the other three corners, but getting from the sidewalk to the bike/ped path on this corner requires either a lengthy detour or a treacherous walk down the rock retaining wall. A path mirroring the one on the south-east corner would be appropriate, and there's room for it right now if the existing fence is moved or removed. If the site is going to undergo major renovations, then it would also be appropriate to add this connection then.
2. The roundabout option on page 46 should be avoided, because the lesson from the South Avenue roundabouts is that continuous traffic flow is a disaster for pedestrians and bicyclists. Stop lights provide a guaranteed opportunity for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross an intersection, but with roundabouts we have to wait for either a gap or for a driver to stop and let us cross. In any case, since our goal should be an enormous reduction in car use, expensive infrastructure to accommodate long-term high car use is a counterproductive waste.
3. This project is a great opportunity for subscription short-term car rental attached to apartment buildings. The main concern I hear over and over again about car-free living is "how am I supposed to get groceries?". A great answer would be "rent a car for one or two hours". However, this service does not really exist in La Crosse- the car rental companies that exist are either at the airport or have pricing and access plans that are not designed for errands. Companies exist that do provide this service, such as Zipcar and Hourcar, but not yet in La Crosse. They use a phone app and membership system to reduce costs and provide flexibility. I believe that there's a real opportunity for an existing or new company to provide this service on a per-building basis: cars (and other vehicles) could be parked at the building, with membership and access to rent those vehicles automatic for building residents. Residents would then have one fewer reason to have to own a car, saving them a fortune (compare \$150/month for short-term car rental plus \$35/month for a bus pass to \$600+/month for car ownership) and greatly reducing the need for parking space. City leadership should work with apartment companies and the Chamber of Commerce to attract or encourage the creation of companies providing this service in La Crosse.
4. The Median Rent analysis on page 19 seems very strange. It suggests that rent and utilities costs of over \$1500/month would be acceptable. However, with median rent in 2023 of \$977, a majority of La Crosse renters were paying more than 30% of their income for rent (according to census data, although it's unclear if this includes utilities), which is the percent generally considered "cost-burdened". If most renters are cost-burdened at \$977 then it's hard to understand how fewer renters would be cost-burdened with rent at \$1500.

This would make sense if the goal is to attract more affluent renters, but the three demographics this plan identifies for La Crosse are "Set to Impress", "College Town", and "Rustbelt Traditions". The first two categories are listed in the appendix as having incomes around \$32,000- only about 60% of the median income. The third category, "Rustbelt Traditions", mostly own their own homes and have lived there for over 15 years, and a large proportion of their net worth is probably in their home. In other words, none of these three categories seem particularly interested in moving to relatively expensive housing.

We should recognize that many downtown jobs are in the service industry and do not pay remotely near the median income, and it just makes sense for people to live as close as possible to their workplace. We need a variety of housing options for a variety of income levels, lifestyle preferences, and family sizes.

5. There are several suspicious spelling and grammar errors, such as "Charmont Hotel" on page 22 and "Lacrosse" or "LaCrosse" on pages 22, 47, and 54, so the document overall might not have had the level of meticulous scrutiny applied to it that it should have before being used to guide future city planning.

6. There is essentially no analysis of mass transit access and use in the document, even though mass transit is critical for reducing car use and making high-density development more viable. This happened with the 2024 Bicycle And Pedestrian Master Plan as well, which suggests a pattern of a worrying institutional blindness somewhere within city planning processes.

Kevin Hundt

On Sun, Oct 26, 2025 at 12:05 PM Kevin Hundt <kevinhundt0@gmail.com> wrote:

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This would make sense if the goal is to attract more affluent renters, but the three demographics this plan identifies for La Crosse are "Set to Impress", "College Town", and "Rustbelt Traditions". The first two categories are described as "frugal consumers looking for a deal" and "liv[ing] in lower rent housing or dorms". The third category, "Rustbelt Traditions", is people who are 31% on Social Security and 20% drawing from retirement accounts (unclear if these categories overlap) and have "nearly \$400,000" in net worth- it's unclear what form this net worth takes, but we might guess that a significant portion of this is probably a house that they've owned and lived in for decades. In other words, none of these three categories seem particularly interested in moving to relatively expensive housing.

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