

**CITY OF LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN  
CITY PLAN COMMISSION  
REPORT  
August 3, 2020**

➤ **AGENDA ITEM – 20-0917 (Tim Acklin)**

Application of City of La Crosse for a Conditional Use Permit allowing installation of an Electronic Message Unit in the La Crosse Center located at 300 Harborview Plaza/315 State St. S.

➤ **ROUTING:** J&A 8/4/2020

➤ **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The City of La Crosse’s La Crosse Center is requesting a Conditional Use Permit to allow for an electronic message unit (EMU) to be installed on the property depicted on attached **MAP PC20-0917**. As part of the La Crosse Center’s expansion and remodeling project the EMU that was located on a pylon sign near the intersection of Pearl and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is proposed to be replaced with an EMU located on a façade of the building that faces the intersection of Pearl Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street S.

On premise EMUs are required to meet the standards stated in table 111-95(b) in the Municipal Code, however, EMUs in the Arts may be permitted additional conditions by the Common Council to regulate their use.

Table 111-95(b)

Category	Standard
Height	14 feet (above natural grade)
Maximum Percentage of Monument Sign	35 percent, no pylon or freestanding EMUs
Overall Maximum Size	60 square feet (sign cabinet space) EMU portion no more than 22 square feet or 35% of 60 sq. ft.(rounded to 22 square feet)
	Pylon EMUs are prohibited
Illumination Standards Nits shall be measured from: (a) the computer control system of the sign; (b) directly from the sign's face; or (c) the most current Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) standards for measuring trespass or nuisance brightness from the appropriate size and type of LED sign, whichever is most restrictive. Footcandles shall be measured at: (a) a height of 5 feet (which is approximately eye height) and viewing the display head-on (directly at a 90-degree angle) from nearest adjacent property line or 100 feet for on-premises signs; (b) 250 feet for off-premises signs; or (c) the most current Illuminating Engineering Society of	A maximum of 5,000 Nits during the day, 100 Nits between sunset and sunrise and at no time more than 100 Nits above ambient light levels and must be equipped with an automatic dimmer and a letter from the manufacturer or UL listed is required. Nits shall be measured from the computer control of the sign or directly from the sign's face or using the most current Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) standards for measuring light trespass or nuisance brightness from the appropriate size and type of LED sign.

North America (IESNA) standards for measuring trespass or nuisance brightness for illuminated signs, whichever is most restrictive. Signs found to be too bright shall be adjusted to meet these standards after notification by the City	
Distance from Residential Zoning District	200 feet from a residential zoning district line and shall not be visible from a residence or residential zoning district line
Hours of Operation/Use	On when business is open and off when business is closed
Dwell Time	60 seconds
Operating Modes for Transitions	Level 1 maximum
Spacing Between Signs	200 feet from another EMU and one EMU per parcel
Spacing from Other uses	200 feet from residential use lot line (linear and radius)
Setbacks from Property lines	Three feet from property line or sidewalk along a street
Portable (commander board, delivery trucks, semi trailers, cabinet on vehicles or trailers)	Prohibited
Interactivity	Prohibited
Light Trespass	0.5 lumens at the property line where sign is located
Nonconforming EMUs	Dwell time 60 seconds

➤ **GENERAL LOCATION:**

La Crosse Center. Façade facing the intersection of Pearl St and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street S.

➤ **RECOMMENDATION OF OTHER BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:**

Plans for the expansion and remodel of the La Crosse Center have been approved by the Common Council, La Crosse Center Board, and the Commercial Design Review Committee.

➤ **CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:**

N/A

➤ **PLANNING RECOMMENDATION:**

Attached is a letter from ISG, the firm hired for the expansion and remodel of the La Crosse Center, addressing each category and standard in the table above. They have provided information stating which standards they have met and which ones they have not. They are requesting a departure from 3 of the standards. They are:

1. Overall Maximum Size. The maximum sign cabinet size may not exceed 60 sqft. EMU portion may not exceed no more than 22 sq. ft. or 35% of 60sqft. The proposed

cabinet size is 60sqft but the size of the EMU is 45sqft or 75% of the 60sqft. Due to its location on the building ISG stated that the EMU needed to be at least this size in order for optimal viewing from vehicles on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

2. Hours of Operation/Use. The requirement is that the EMU can only be on when the business is open and off when business is closed. ISG is requesting consideration to allow the sign to be on at times when the center is closed so it can continually be used to strategically promote and inform the public of upcoming events.
3. Dwell Time. The dwell time, which is the time from one screen to the next, is 60 seconds. ISG is requesting this to be reduced to 08 seconds to better promote upcoming events.

Overall staff has no issues with recommending approval of a Conditional Use Permit for an EMU at this location. There has been an EMU at this intersection for many years promoting events for the La Crosse Center. Additionally, the current EMU has been continuously on when the La Crosse Center has been closed and has had a dwell time of less than 60 seconds. Staff is also not concerned with the size of the EMU. While the EMU is larger than permitted the overall cabinet size is not increased. It is important for it to be clearly seen from the street.

**Planning Department staff recommends approval of this item as submitted including the proposed Dwell Time, Hours of Operation, and Size.**

JULY 28, 2020

Tim Acklin  
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La Crosse, WI 54601  
Acklint@cityoflacrosse.org



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RE: LA CROSSE CENTER SIGNAGE CUP NARRATIVE -  
CITY OF LA CROSSE - 400 LA CROSSE STREET, LA CROSSE, WI 54601

Tim

Thank you for your email and call on July 28, 2020 regarding the La Crosse Center Signage CUP. We have prepared the following information to address EMU categories and their standards. Please note that for your convenience each category is stated below followed by the requirement along with our corresponding response.

1. **Height-14 ft** (above natural grade)

*ISG Response: Refer to sheet 3A3-23 WALL SECTIONS- ENTRANCE HALL & EAST CONNECTOR*

- i. In View 4, Wall Section-Outer Lobby it is illustrated that the Electronic Message Unit (EMU) is 8'-0" off first floor. The height of the unit is 6'-0" making the combined height at 14 ft. The total height of the EMU is 14'-0". This information can also be found highlighted on pg 8 of the CUP package*

2. **Maximum Percentage of Monument Sign** - 35 percent, no pylon or freestanding EMUs

*ISG Response: Not Applicable*

3. **The Overall Maximum Size** - 60 sq. ft. (sign cabinet space) EMU portion no more than 22 sq. ft. or 35% of 60 sq. ft (rounded to 22 sq. ft.). Pylon EMUs are prohibited.

*ISG Response: Cabinet size is 60 sq. ft. The EMU size is 45 sq. ft. We are asking council to make a consideration for a sign which is 45 sq. ft. making it 75% of Cabinet. The cabinet size determined based on vehicular viewing distance from 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.*

4. **Illumination Standards Nits** shall be measured from: (a) the computer control system of the sign; (b) directly from the sign's face; or (c) the most current Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) standards for measuring trespass or nuisance brightness from the appropriate size and type of LED sign, whichever is most restrictive. Footcandles shall be measured at: (a) a height of 5 feet (which is approximately eye height) and viewing the display head-on (directly at a 90-degree angle) from nearest adjacent property line or 100 feet for on-premises signs; (b) 250 feet for off-premises signs; or (c) the most current Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) standards for measuring trespass or nuisance brightness for illuminated signs, whichever is most restrictive. Signs found to be too bright shall be adjusted to meet these standards after notification by the City.

A maximum of 5,000 Nits during the day, 100 Nits between sunset and sunrise and at no time more than 100 Nits above ambient light levels and must be equipped with an automatic dimmer and a letter from the manufacturer or UL listed is required. Nits shall be measured from the computer control of the sign or directly from the sign's face or using the most current Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) standards for measuring light trespass or nuisance brightness from the appropriate size and type of LED sign.

*ISG Response: The EMU has a maximum of 1,600 Nits with dimming capability at 256 levels*

5. **Distance from Residential Zoning District-** 200 feet from a residential zoning district line and shall not be visible from a residence or residential zoning district line

*ISG Response: The new EMU for the La Crosse Center is more than 200 feet from a residential zoning district line. There are residences on upper floors of adjacent downtown buildings. Also, there is a hotel across 2<sup>nd</sup> street (Holiday Inn). The previous sign was three-sided and viewable from all of these residence locations. The new sign has been strategically angled to minimize direct viewing from hotel and majority of upper floor residences. Also, the new sign is lower to the ground than the previous sign.*

6. **Hours of Operation/Use-** On when business is open and off when business is closed

*ISG Response: The intention of this sign is to display and inform the public of present and upcoming events at the La Crosse Center. While the La Crosse Center will adhere to this requirement, it would also like the council to consider allowing the sign to be on at times when the center is closed. When the center is closed the sign would only be used to strategically promote upcoming events.*

7. **Dwell Time-** 60 seconds (Time from one screen to the next)

*ISG Response: The La Crosse Center requests this to be reduced to 08 seconds to better promote upcoming events.*

8. **Operating Modes for Transitions-** Level 1 maximum (Segmented message static display only - message change with no transition). maximum

*ISG Response: Noted.*

9. **Spacing Between Signs-** 200 feet from another EMU and one EMU per parcel

*ISG Response: The EMU is more than 200 feet from another EMU, there is not another one on site or an adjacent site.*

10. **Spacing from Other uses** - 200 feet from residential use lot line (linear and radius)

*ISG Response: The Emu is more than 200 feet away from a residential lot line.*

11. **Setbacks from Property lines-** Three feet from property line or sidewalk along a street

*ISG Response: The EMU is 10 feet from the sidewalk along the street*

12. **Portable (commander board, delivery trucks, semi trailers, cabinet on vehicles or trailers).** - Prohibited

*ISG Response: Noted, The EMU is not portable.*

13. **Interactivity** - Prohibited

*ISG Response: Noted, The EMU is not interactive.*

14. **Light Trespass** - 0.5 lumens at the property line where sign is located.



*ISG Response: Noted .*

15. **Nonconforming EMUs**– Dwell time 60 seconds.

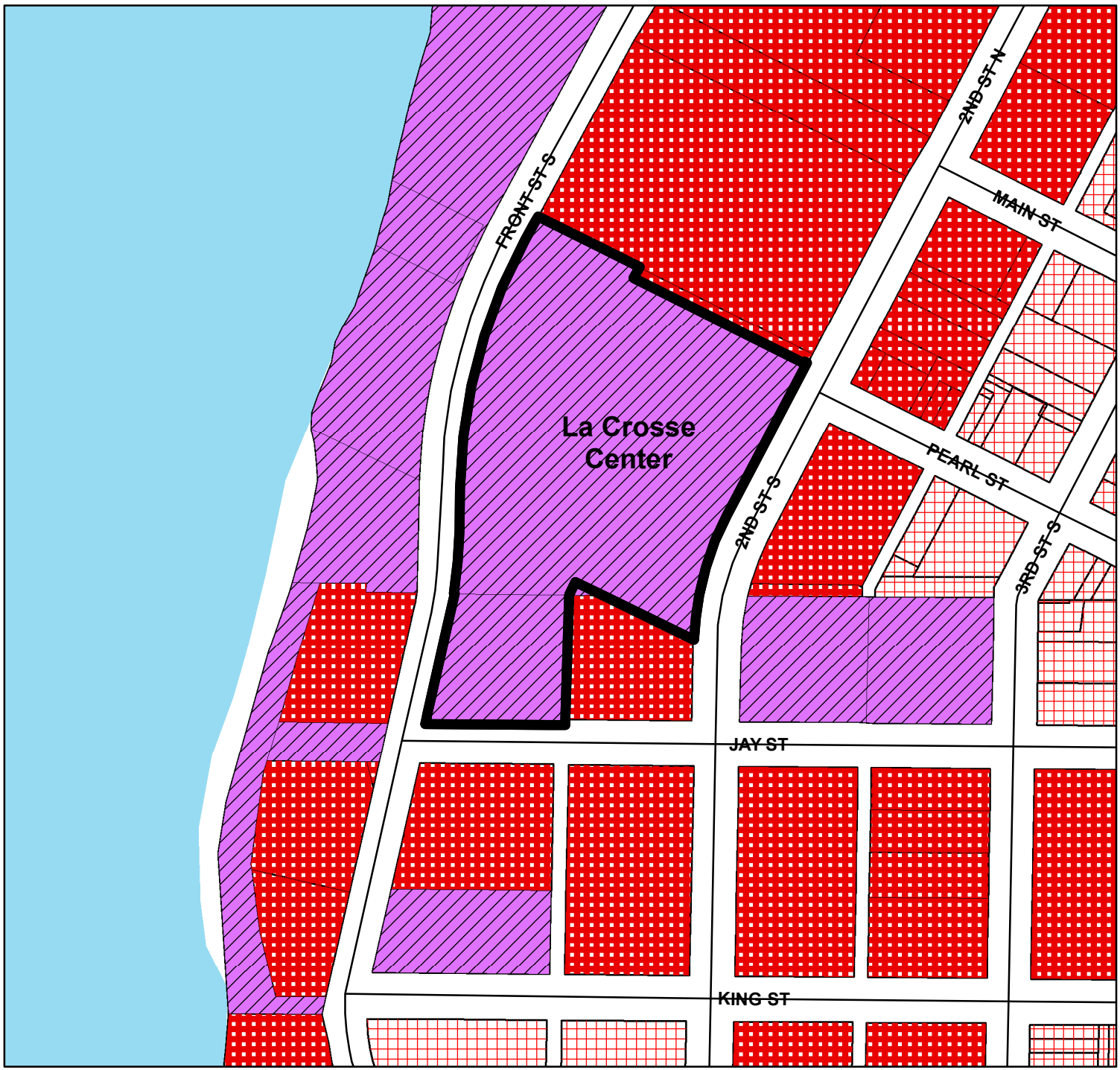
*ISG Response: Not Applicable.*

I have included the original CUP with this letter for your reference. Please contact me at 563.568.8227 or via email at [Stephanie.Runkle@ISGInc.com](mailto:Stephanie.Runkle@ISGInc.com) with any questions or if there is any additional information we can provide in support of this project.

Sincerely,

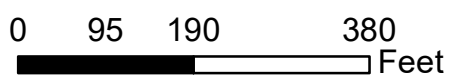
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephanie Runkle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S".

**Stephanie Runkle**  
Project Coordinator  
[Stephanie.Runkle@ISGInc.com](mailto:Stephanie.Runkle@ISGInc.com)



## BASIC ZONING DISTRICTS

- R1 - SINGLE FAMILY
- R2 - RESIDENCE
- WR - WASHBURN RES
- R3 - SPECIAL RESIDENCE
- R4 - LOW DENSITY MULTI
- R5 - MULTIPLE DWELLING
- R6 - SPECIAL MULTIPLE
- PD- PLANNED DEVELOP
- TND - TRAD NEIGH DEV.
- C1 - LOCAL BUSINESS
- C2 - COMMERCIAL
- C3 - COMMUNITY BUSINESS
- M1 - LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- M2 - HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
- PS - PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC
- PL - PARKING LOT
- UT - PUBLIC UTILITY
- CON - CONSERVANCY
- FW - FLOODWAY
- A1 - AGRICULTURAL
- EA - EXCLUSIVE AG
- City Limits
- SUBJECT PROPERTY





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