Character Area Definitions

Zoning Update using a Context Sensitive, Character-based Approach

A character-based approach to the zoning code update is based on the NDC Framework used in the Comprehensive Plan. The Built Form Study sampled all of the identified areas to better understand typical character, context, building, lot and street types. This analysis will then be used to confirm particular “character” areas of the city that will be used to calibrate applicable urban standards and dimensions.

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth the vision for future land uses across all properties within the City of La Crosse. Future land use identifies the mix of uses which may become appropriate for a given property over the next twenty years. This concept takes into account the larger context of neighboring properties and how they interact together to serve residents Future land use is based on the "Neighborhood, District, and Corridor Framework" (NDC), a system devised by the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU). *Source: 2040 Comprehensive Plan*

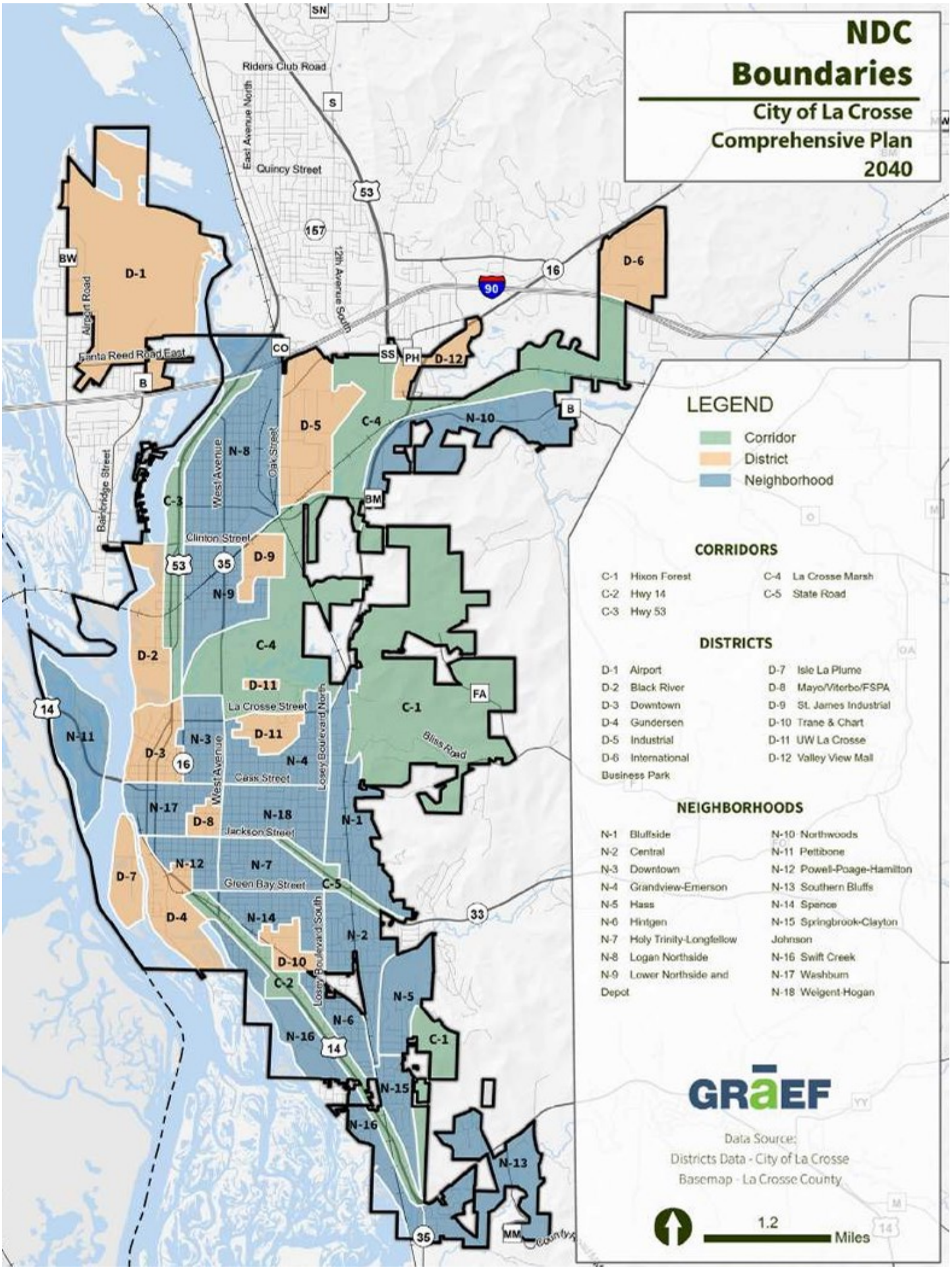
The intent of the NDC Framework model is to encourage walkable, compact communities that are rich with amenities and celebrate the history of the built environment and the preservation of natural features, all while respecting the fabric of communities. NDC proposes three fundamental classifications that organize La Crosse into a mix of uses rather than isolated land uses. NDC does not replace the adopted zoning code, but instead paints a broad and cohesive long-term picture for the built environment. The NDC model can pair well with form-based codes, a land development regulation that focuses on the physical form of the built environment in relation to the public realm as the code's overarching principle. If the City decides to integrate a form-based code in the future, the NDC model can be used to guide a cohesive urban form. *Source: 2040 Comprehensive Plan*

A character-based code guides development to build upon and strengthen the unique characteristics of a community, helping to preserve desired character. A character-based code is organized around the unique physical features of the built environment by documenting and analyzing the community’s existing urban form at different scales, from the broad characteristics of a community’s neighborhoods to particular building types.

Neighborhoods, which usually are areas that contain blocks or buildings that are unified in character or style. A neighborhood is often walkable and may have a clearly defined center or edge.

Districts, which are areas typically defined by a particular use or activity, such as light industrial districts.

Corridors, which can be man-made elements relating to movement, such as roads or railways, or natural elements such as rivers. Whether man-made or natural, these corridors often define boundaries within and between neighborhoods. However, roads that function as commercial corridors often serve as the center of many communities. *Source: adapted from “Form-based Codes: A Step by Step Guide for Communities”, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning & the Form Based Codes Institute*


NDC Boundaries
City of La Crosse Comprehensive Plan 2040
LEGEND
Corridor
District
Neighborhood
CORRIDORS
C-1 Hixon Forest
C-2 Hwy 14
C-3 Hwy 53
C-4 La Crosse Marsh
C-5 State Road
DISTRICTS
D-1 Airport
D-2 Black River
D-3 Downtown
D-4 Gundersen
D-5 Industrial
D-6 International Business Park
D-7 Isle La Plume
D-8 Mayo/Viterbo/FSPA
D-9 St. James Industrial
D-10 Trane & Chart
D-11 UW La Crosse
D-12 Valley View Mall
NEIGHBORHOODS
N-1 Bluffside
N-2 Central
N-3 Downtown
N-4 Grandview-Emerson
N-5 Hass
N-6 Hintgen
N-7 Holy Trinity-Longfellow
N-8 Logan Northside
N-9 Lower Northside and Depot
N-10 Northwoods
N-11 Pettibone
N-12 Powell-Poage-Hamilton
N-13 Southern Bluffs
N-14 Spence
N-15 Springbrook-Clayton Johnson
N-16 Swift Creek
N-17 Washburn
N-18 Weigent-Hogan
GRAEF
Data Source:
Districts Data - City of La Crosse
Basemap - La Crosse County
1.2
Miles
Riders Club Road
East Avenue North
Quincy Street
12th Avenue South
Airport Road
Barkbridge Street
West Avenue
Oak Street
Clinton Street
La Crosse Street
Cass Street
Jackson Street
Green Bay Street
Losey Boulevard North
Losey Boulevard South
Bliss Road
Ranta Reed Road East

Traditional neighborhoods—residential areas that are mostly historic with fine grain block and street pattern, alley service, prominent parks and walkable streets that connect to neighborhood destinations. Physical features: compact lots, 1.5– 2.5 stories in height, shallow front yards, sidewalks and alley loaded parking.

Traditional neighborhoods/varied - residential areas that mostly contain smaller lots with connected streets and alley service but also include a mix of contemporary, front -loaded building types. historic with fine grain block and street pattern, alley service, prominent parks and walkable streets that connect to neighborhood destinations. Physical features: 1 to 1.5 stories in height, common front yards and some lots that area wider.

Traditional shopping street—a walkable, retail environment located in traditional neighborhoods that contain commercial sales and services more scaled and compatible with existing residential development.

Physical features: compact lots, 1-2 stories in height, zero front yards, shopfront frontage common with alley loaded service and on-street parking.

Urban Mixed Residential—an area that contains a mix residential building types from detached single family to larger multi-family apartments.

Physical features: compact lots, 1-stories in height, shallow front yards; alley loaded and on-street parking.

Modular neighborhood—residential areas that are composed mobile and manufactured building types. Urban pattern is usually tight (narrow) sites with generous streets; lot is often in single ownership

Physical features: 1 stories in height, shallow front yards, parking in front or the side of the unit

Corridor mixed– typically corridors that contain a mix of commercial, residential and institutional buildings within the same block and/or across the street from each other; common in traditional neighborhoods that are transitioning or growing. service, prominent parks and walkable streets that connect to neighborhood destinations.

Physical features: 1-2 stories but other physical features vary depending on building type

Commercial Corridor/Small Format— most commercial corridors in the city contain a mix of building types and sizes; the small format commercial corridor is common in several areas

Physical features: wide lots, 1-2 stories in height, generous setbacks with parking common in front of the entrance

Commercial Corridor/Large Format— most commercial corridors in the city contain a mix of building types and sizes; the large format commercial corridor is common in several areas such as the Valley View Mall.

Physical features: wide and deep lots, 1-2 stories in height, generous setbacks with parking common in front of the entrance

Downtown—The downtown is made up of a larger “core” area that contains a number “main street” blocks that are highly walkable and characterized by transparent store-fronts. The downtown also includes a historic district which overlaps much of the “main street” blocks.

Physical features: “main street” blocks are multiple stories with highly defined shopfronts; masonry construction is typical; the periphery of the core contains more and larger surface parking areas.

Downtown/”Main Street”– the heart of downtown contains a well defined walkable district with retail shop fronts set at the back of the sidewalk creating a very intimate, human scaled environment;

Physical features: high level of shopfront transparency at the street level, common exterior is brick; alley service to the block interiors; parking on-street

District — a number of districts occur in the city—these can be education, health or recreation in use; they tend to include larger buildings arranged to form an identity or sense of spaces but also can include large parking areas.

Physical features: wide lots, buildings often more than 3 stories in height, setbacks and yard vary

Industrial small format— there area multiple areas characterized as ‘industrial’ with these building types arranged into small formats where they respond to a connected street and block pattern, alley loaded and small operationa areas

Physical features: typical traditional small lots, 1-2 stories in height, common material is metal siding and some masonry finishes at the building base

Industrial large format— there area multiple areas characterized as 'large format industrial' that include very large floorplate buildings including large outdoor storage areas, loading and large surface parking areas

Physical features: multiple stories in height depending on functions and use; typical flats roofs, common material is metal siding and some masonry finishes at the building base