

# theme

# A CONNECTED CITY

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**We envision a downtown with strong connections from the river to downtown, to the neighborhoods, and to the bluffs.**

Having strong connections between spaces is instrumental to our downtown's success and fosters intangible connections. Our greatest gains will come with a commitment to being more equitable to all modes of transportation.





## ORGANIZATION

- Mobility
- Mobility Demonstrations
- Parking



## OPPORTUNITIES

- Survey sidewalks in downtown, giving upgrade priority to those with mobility barriers such as brick or cobblestone pavement
- Work with local business owners to upgrade entrances and restrooms for accessibility
- Develop a winter maintenance program that ensures sidewalks, ramps, and bus shelters remain free of snow and provide a clear path to destinations
- Synchronize signal timing
- Review ordinances and develop standards for use of alley space by adjacent businesses including acceptable uses, plantings, decoration, seating, to ensure the spaces remain open to traffic.
- Install decorative paving, lighting, and plantings in targeted alleys.
- Host a mural-making initiative around an important theme to the La Crosse community, such as equity and inclusivity.
- Explore a parking benefit district in downtown
- Consider revenue bonds to fund the ramp LPR counter system
- Install directional wayfinding graphics to inform travelers of destinations

# INTRODUCTION

Downtown has made significant strides in shifting the priority of moving people in cars to moving people by any mode of transportation.

In the past, mobility was defined by the ability to move and park automobiles at the expense of the pedestrian or bicycle. Universal design has returned priority to those who commute by foot, wheels, bike, or public transit, leveling the playing field with the automobile. A shift is needed to moving people instead of moving vehicles. By prioritizing the person, not one type of transportation, a genuinely equitable mobility system will result. La Crosse is moving in this direction, starting with the Green Complete Streets policy adopted in 2012, which requires new road construction projects to consider all modes of travel. This has resulted in new bike infrastructure, more sidewalks, upgraded street crossings with bump-outs, and bike fix-it stations. La Crosse should continue the Green Complete Streets program and incorporate more upgrades for bicyclists. The following is an overview of each mode of travel and their performance.

## VEHICULAR

Average daily traffic (ADT) from the north on 3rd Street is about 22,200 and from the south on South Avenue is about 16,000. Within the district, the one-way pairs of 3rd and 4th Street each experience about 10,000 to 16,000 ADT. West Avenue has about 23,000 ADT. ADT is the most recently available data from WisDOT (2014-2018).

## PEDESTRIANS

Downtown has a walk score of 71 out of 100 (walkscore.com). This is largely because of the clustering of restaurants, shops, entertainment options, and parks easily accessed on foot within a short walking trip. Most people are willing to walk a 1/4-mile to their destination, but studies have also shown non-commuting trips average about 1 mile.

The pedestrian's experience while walking influences their tolerance to get to their destination. A 1/4-mile threshold can increase if the path is well shaded and has good lighting and sidewalks. Almost all of downtown is easily walkable from any starting point. The historic

## VEHICULAR ADT



**THE GREEN COMPLETE STREETS POLICY REQUIRES NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS TO CONSIDER ALL MODES OF TRAVEL**

architecture, and mature tree canopy, well-maintained sidewalks, combined with a flat topography, make walking to the downtown core relatively free of barriers.

## MOBILITY-IMPAIRED EXPERIENCE

La Crosse should be accessible to everyone. La Crosse County reportedly has 35,000 people living with a mobility impairment. Persons with impairments struggle to access events, businesses, and recreational opportunities when cities are not designed to accommodate their needs. The impediments existing in the physical infrastructure are not intentional, and without a conscious understanding of barriers, they go unnoticed. Some of the barriers in downtown include:

- Lack of automatically entrance doors
- Offset entrance thresholds into a businesses
- Crosswalks with lips or barriers to pushing the walk button
- Placement and convenience of actuated signals near crosswalks
- Cobblestone surfaces that create uneven surfaces and tripping hazards for someone using a walker, cane, or wheelchair
- Closing sidewalks during construction and forcing the traveler into a street that may be poorly maintained
- Bike racks, planters, or trees placed in the sidewalk path
- Narrow sidewalks
- Poorly designed accessible stalls

- Poorly maintained sidewalks in the winter
- Restrooms that are inaccessible

These barriers can be resolved as the public sector, non- profit organizations, and local businesses work together to make the environment downtown more friendly to persons with a disability.

## TRANSIT

The La Crosse Regional Transit Center is located at Grand River Station in downtown, and the hub for the city's transit service.

While public input was more oriented to active transportation, participants indicated interest in establishing a local circulator between Viterbo University, Mayo Clinic, University of Wisconsin La Crosse, Western Technical College, and nearby neighborhoods.



## GREEN COMPLETE STREETS

Through the Green Complete Streets ordinance, the City of La Crosse has committed to:

- Provide safe, convenient, and comfortable routes for walking, bicycling, and public transportation
- Encourage increased use of these modes of transportation
- Enable convenient travel as part of daily activities
- Improve the public welfare by addressing a wide array of health and environmental problems
- Meet the needs of all users of the streets, including children, older adults, and people with disabilities

These standards apply:

- As a routine part of everyday operations
- During every corridor project on public or private property
- To existing and future public and private streets
- Within the scope of pavement resurfacing, restriping, or signalization operations

# MOBILITY

The concepts presented in the plan are just that - ideas for the future that need to be further investigated to understand their feasibility.

Concepts are separated into the following project categories:

- Streets
- Trails
- Bike lanes and Protected Bike Lanes
- Neighborhood Greenways

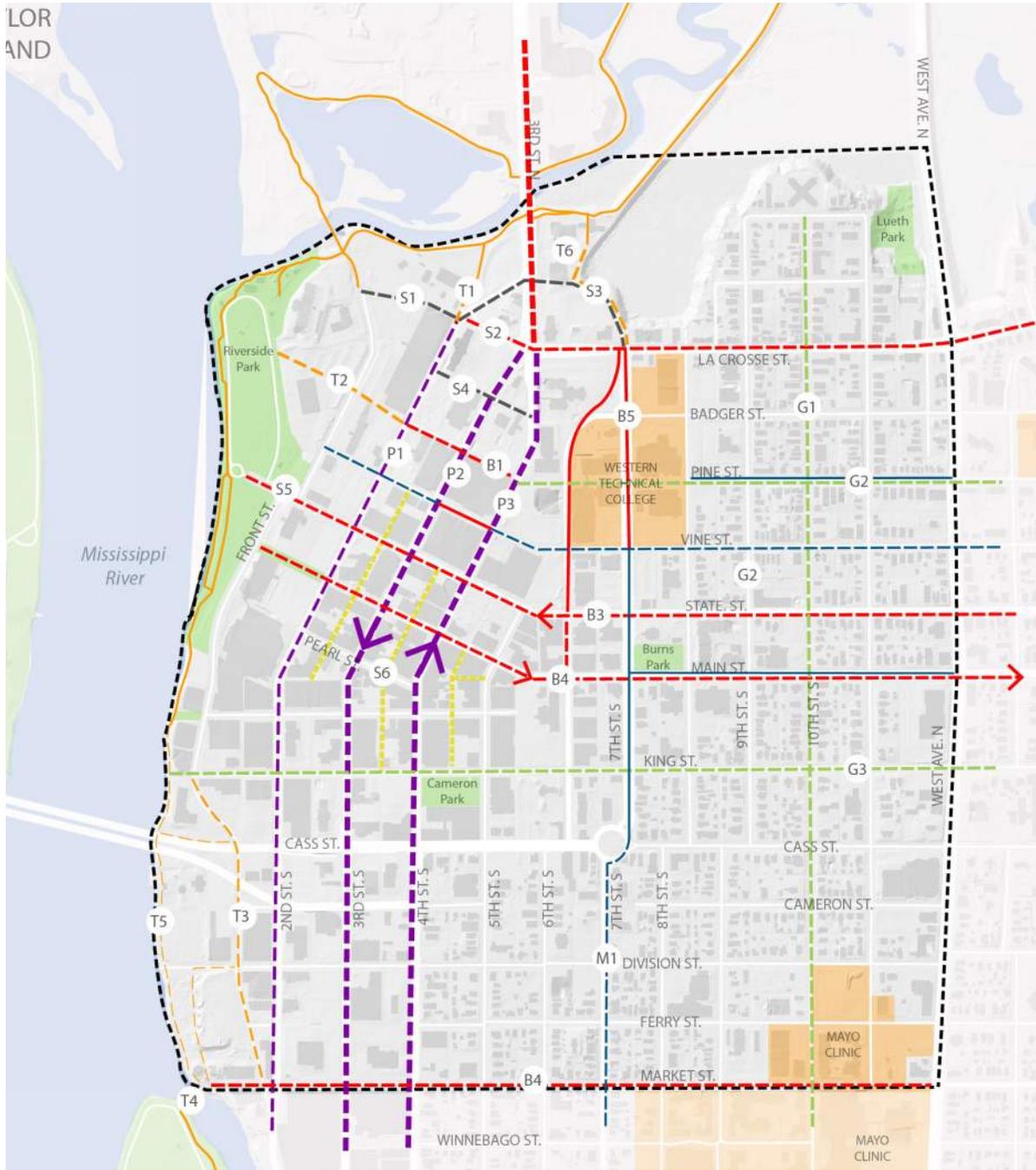
While the plan identifies many possible enhancements, high priority projects include:

- 3rd/4th Street Circulation Design
- 2nd Street Cycletrack
- La Crosse Street to Front Street Connection
- Front Street Pathway from Riverside Park to Houska Park

### LEGEND

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
(B1) BIKE LANES		
(T1) TRAIL		
(S1) SHARED LANE MARKING		
(P1) CYCLE TRACK		
(G1) BICYCLE BOULEVARD		
(S1) VEHICULAR CONNECTION		
ALLEY CONNECTION		
STUDY AREA		
BIKE SHARE STATION		

### MOBILITY FRAMEWORK





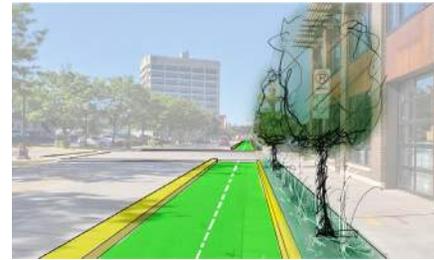
**STREET PROJECTS**

MAP KEY	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE	ISSUES/REQUIREMENTS
S1	La Crosse Street to Front Street Extension	Extension of La Crosse Street from 2nd Street to Front Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better access from east side to Riverside Park</li> <li>- Eliminates Front Street cul-de-sac</li> <li>- Opens Oktoberfest site and north riverfront to future development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Right-of-way dedication through Oktoberfest</li> <li>- Illustrated alignment is schematic and may change given specific development plan</li> <li>- Creates a festival street that can be temporarily closed for events</li> </ul>
S2	La Crosse Street Improvement	Connects La Crosse Street to Front Street	Part of La Crosse to Front Street link, improves geometry and simplifies complex intersection	Existing street
S3	North Circulation Alignment	Connects 7th and 2nd Street North, providing greater connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diverts local traffic from the north away from the La Crosse and 3rd Street North intersection</li> <li>- Distributes traffic easily to three downtown corridors</li> <li>- Aligns two offset intersections</li> <li>- Clarifies circulation and site plan</li> </ul>	Minor redesign of parking lots and ROW dedication
S4	Badger Street extension	Connects Badger Street from 4th to 2nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides local access to and through major redevelopment site</li> <li>- Part of an improved access system around the 3/4th and La Cross intersection</li> </ul>	Requires street dedication through the Tribune redevelopment site.
S5	Front Street alignment at State Street	Resolves offset intersection of Front Street north and south of State with realignment and possible roundabout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eliminates turning movements and conflicts created by offset</li> <li>- Roundabout may provide a public art opportunity to complement eagle monument at the State Street circle</li> </ul>	- Roundabout requires some site revisions at 100 Harborview Plaza but reduces impact on park and possible historic fort site on the north side of State
S6	Pearl Street	Redesign of Pearl Street to become a festival street (no curbs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improves Pearl Street's role as a pedestrian environment</li> <li>- Improves connection to La Crosse Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible replacement of underground utilities.</li> <li>- Needs further investigation.</li> </ul>
S7	Front/Ferry Street realignment to 2nd Street	Connects Front and Ferry Street to 2nd Street, vacating Front Street between Ferry and Market with redevelopment of riverfront site east of Front	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eliminates hazardous convergence of Front and 2nd Street at Market Street</li> <li>- Provides a future green space at Front/2nd triangle with redevelopment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vacation of a portion of Front with development of a green space.</li> <li>- Existing rail spur may be removed if possible or retained as part of a local transportation shuttle to Gunderson campus.</li> </ul>



**TRAIL PROJECTS**

MAP KEY	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE	ISSUES/REQUIREMENTS
T1	Trail spur to 2nd Street	Connects 2nd Street cycletrack to La Crosse River Trail	- Key bike/ped connection from Downtown system to regional trail network and connection to northern neighborhoods	- Alignment depends on future redevelopment or reconfiguration of Oktoberfest site. - May involve conversion or replacement of existing access road
T2	Pine Street Pathway	Connects proposed Pine Street neighborhood greenway corridor to Riverside Park	- Part of re-envisioning Pine Street as a community amenity and development corridor linking UWL, Western Technical College, and government center campuses to the riverfront	- Requires minor to moderate redesign of Landmark parking to provide path continuity - Incorporates and extends existing path north of CenturyLink office building
T3	Riverfront Path extension	Connects popular path from King Street to Houska Park bridge using Front Street sidewalk and proposed sidepath to Market Street and new trail along flood plain edge of future redevelopment site, now used for trailer storage. Existing path under bridge links to proposed 2nd Street cycletrack	- Connects Riverside and Houska Parks - May catalyze future redevelopment in south downtown area and riverfront	- May require some right of way acquisition between Cass and Division - Probably requires redevelopment of riverfront site between Division and Market Streets
T4	Houska Park Bridge	Access to Houska Park, using existing bridge in short-term with possible bridge replacement to full trail width standards. Also includes connection to a future Market Street bikeway	- Connects Riverside and Houska Parks - May catalyze future redevelopment in south downtown area and riverfront - With Market Street bikeway, connects Washburn neighborhood, Viterbo, and Mayo campus to Houska Park	Uses existing bridge in the short term, with eventual replacement to a standard width trail bridge
T5	Riverfront Path extension (long-term)	Optimum trail path along Mississippi River from King Street to Houska Park	- Provides ideal Riverfront Path connection, separated from streets	- Requires significant ROW dedications (Mariott) and negotiation through dock and industrial sites.



**BIKE LANES AND PROTECTED BIKE LANE PROJECTS**

MAP KEY	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE	ISSUES/REQUIREMENTS
<b>B1</b>	Pine Street	Identifies a bicycle and pedestrian route through County Courthouse site and on Pine Street, connecting 2nd and 4th Streets. Also includes RRFB protected pedestrian crossings of 3rd and 4th Streets	- Part of re-envisioning Pine Street as a community amenity and development corridor linking UWL, Western, and government center campuses to riverfront	- Requires minor redesign of county parking lot, probably by widening existing landscaped parking bay returns to protect bike and pedestrian access.
<b>B2</b>	State Street bike lane	One-way standard eastbound bike lane between West Avenue and the river, paired with Main Street	- Combined with on-street bike route east of West Avenue, provides east-west crosstown bike access	- One-way bike lane can retain two sided parking on 42-foot sections; parking would be one-side only on 38' sections
<b>B3</b>	Main Street bike lane	One-way standard westbound bike lane between West Avenue and the river, paired with Main Street	Provides east-west crosstown bike access	- One-way bike lane can retain two sided parking on 42-foot sections; parking would be one-side only on any 38' sections
<b>B4</b>	Market Street bike lanes	Standard bike lanes on Market Street	- Connects Washburn neighborhood, Viterbo, and Mayo campus to Houska Park	- Probably eliminates on-street parking on Market Street with 2-6' bike lanes and 2-12' travel lanes
<b>P1</b>	2nd Street Cycletrack	Protected cycletrack on east side of 2nd Street from La Crosse to Market Street	- Provides primary bicycle access to riverfront locations and points north and south of Downtown - Reduces conflicts between pedestrians and bicyclists on the riverwalk - Supports redevelopment in the 2nd Street corridor - Has traffic calming benefits on 2nd Street	- Replaces on-street parking on one side of 2nd Street
<b>P2</b>	3rd Street protected bike lane	BPAC recommendation. Provides southbound protected bike lane between Badger and Market	- Provides direct and safe bicycle access through the downtown core	- Limits on-street parking to one-side on 42' wide sections. 46' sections through core blocks can retain two-sided parking. - Possible continuation to Gunderson with modification/widening of existing west side path to shared use path standards. Also, possible reuse of rail spur that serves the brewery, if that spur were abandoned
<b>P3</b>	4th Street protected bike lane	BPAC recommendation. Provides northbound protected bike lane between Badger and Market	- Provides direct and safe bicycle access through the downtown core	- 42' section on-street parking to one-side.



**NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAY PROJECTS**

MAP KEY	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE	ISSUES/REQUIREMENTS
<b>G1</b>	North-South Greenway	Neighborhood greenway (bicycle boulevard) treatment with traffic calmers, route signage, and shared lane markings for wayfinding on 10th from the neighborhood to Gunderson campus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- North-south connection that links neighborhood nodes and development potentials at 10th and La Crosse and Pine Street</li> <li>- Connects route to Gunderson through Washburn neighborhood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Envisions traffic calming such as mini-roundabouts, signage, and appropriate signage and crossings of major cross streets</li> </ul>
<b>G2</b>	Pine Street Greenway	East-west connection and development corridor from UWL to Riverfront. Uses a variety of facilities, including neighborhood greenway, woonerf, and campus mall segments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of re-envisioning Pine Street as a community amenity and development corridor linking UWL, Western, and government center campuses to riverfront</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involves more detailed planning and design of possible woonerf and special street segments</li> <li>- Protected crossing of West Avenue required for safe continuity</li> </ul>
<b>G3</b>	King Street Greenway	Existing east-west greenway between Front Street and West Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neighborhood stabilization project and support for historic district</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neighborhood development policies along the corridor</li> </ul>
<b>M1</b>	7th Street Corridor	Continuation of shared lane markings and bike route signage south to Green Bay Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuation of a principal north-south through route.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Installation of shared lane markings south of Cass Street</li> </ul>

# PROTOTYPICAL STREETScape ENHANCEMENTS

The design of sidewalks and intersections in downtown significantly influences people's perception of the district and their sense of belonging to the area. The community survey in the planning process identified several intersections that need improvement, citing concerns for visibility, crossing distances, vehicle speed, low lighting, condition of existing elements and surfaces.

Downtown alone has a diverse set of streetscape amenities that changes from one area to the next. The variety makes it difficult for the city to store replacement parts and to efficiently repair/replace amenities. Also, the variety creates visual noise that does not reinforce the image of downtown.

This plan recommends standardizing future streetscape improvements across the city to manage costs, while identifying special districts for exception from the standard. In general, a standard should be created for the core of downtown and a separate standard created for the neighborhoods.



- A Standard crosswalk on state highways
- B Artisan crosswalk on local streets
- C Countdown timer at all crossings
- D Pedestrian paths that are obstacle-free
- E Uniform bicycle parking and benches
- F Uniform receptacles (waste/recycling)
- G Uniform, energy-efficient streetlights
- H Stormwater Best Management Practices
- I Restore urban tree canopy
- J Uniform parklet (seasonal) dining
- K Parking pay kiosk



## OPPORTUNITIES

### STREETSCAPE TAXONOMY

The prototypical streetscape concept does not commit the city to initiating initiate a streetscape project. Rather, it identifies features that need to remain in rhythm to reinforce the image of downtown.

#### A. Standard crosswalks.

Crosswalks on highways need to follow federal MUTCD standards. Ladder crossings provide the most visibility of the pedestrian zones.

**B. Artisan crosswalks on local streets.** Crosswalks not on the highway system could exhibit unique artwork from local artists.

**C. Countdown timers at all crossings.** Countdown timers help customers know how much time they have to walk across the street. Audible signals help people with impaired vision.

**D. Obstacle-free Zone.** Sidewalks should be free of obstructions and have consistent surfaces. Pavers provide a special character to the pedestrian, yet can be difficult to navigate for people with mobility impairments. Pedestrian paths should be built with an even surface and well-maintained.

**E. Uniform bicycle parking and benches.** Bicycle parking and seating should be placed

outside of the pedestrian zone. These can be placed between the curb and walking path.

**F. Uniform receptacles.** Uniform amenities creates predictability for service and maintenance, while reinforcing the image of downtown. Also, receptacles help keep the area clean of debris.

**G. Stormwater Best Management Practices.** Streetscape projects should consider methods for intercepting stormwater to manage runoff.

**H. Restore urban tree canopy.** Trees should be maintained and replaced when necessary.

**I. Uniform parklet (seasonal) dining.** Parklets provide additional outdoor seating spaces, while reserving the sidewalk for pedestrians.

**J. Parking pay kiosk.** Rather than individual parking meters, parking pay kiosks can be strategically placed throughout downtown. In general, the streetscape should be

- Prepare a streetscape handbook. The handbook should include typical streetscape features to apply throughout the community. This includes furniture (benches, bicycle racks, bus shelters, kiosks, waste/recycle collection, newspaper dispensers, railings), lighting, street trees and other plantings, street signage, paving, and public art placement. The handbook should identify different segments of the community that may be eligible for design exceptions.
- Prepare a detailed walkability plan. The plan should include an inventory of sidewalks in downtown, identifying obstructions and ADA issues. The process could be a collaborative initiative with students at Western Technical College or through an RFP. The plan should identify the precise location of barriers, an opinion of probable cost, and a phased implementation schedule.
- Work with local business owners to upgrade entrances and restrooms for better accessibility. This may include businesses receiving small ramps from the City or through a grant.
- Develop a winter maintenance program that ensures sidewalks, ramps, and bus shelters remain free of snow and provide a clear path to destinations. This could be supported through a Parking Benefit District or DMI.
- Initiate streetscape projects that improve visibility for pedestrians.

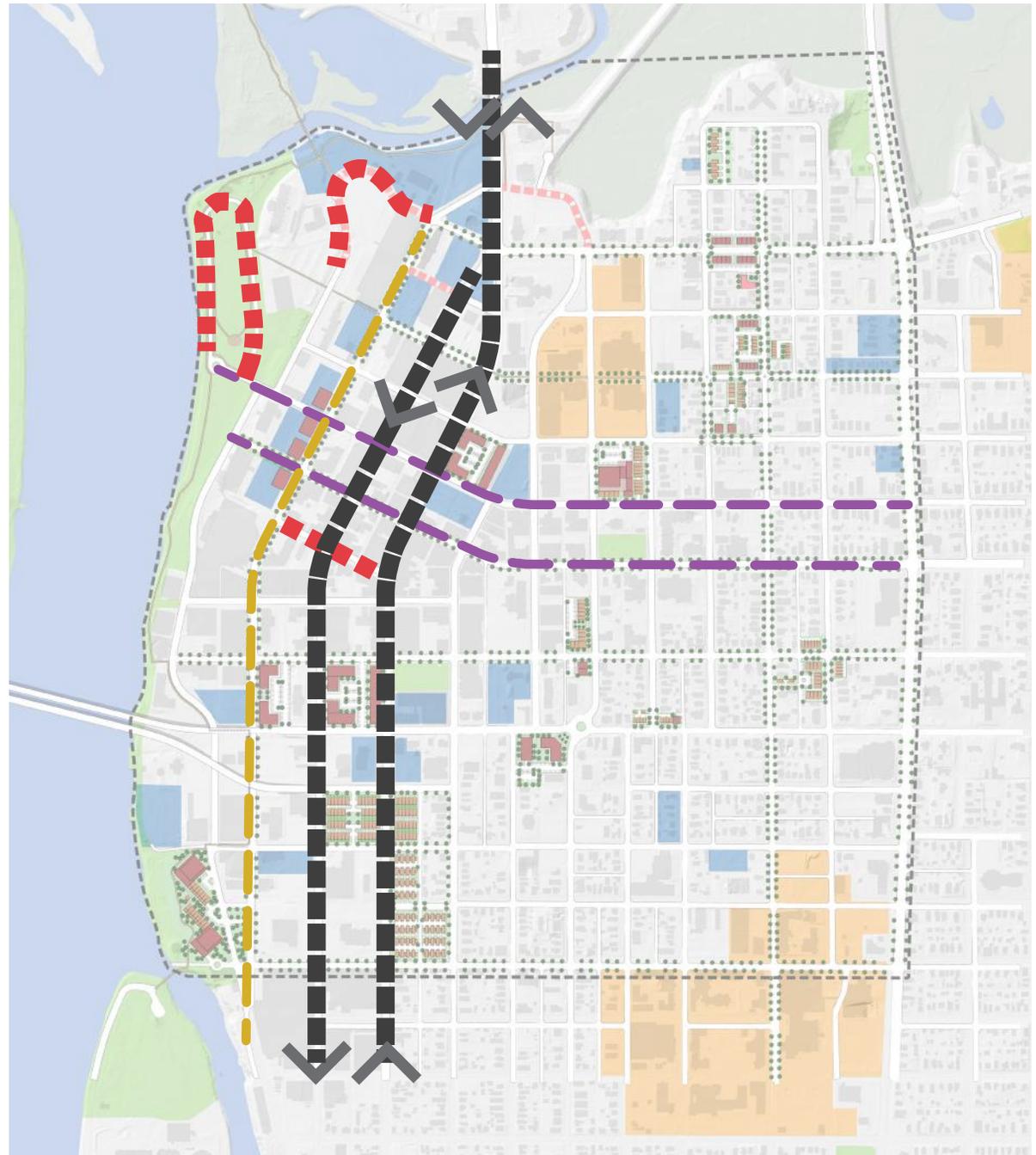
# MOBILITY DEMONSTRATIONS

La Crosse is dedicated to a holistic approach to road design through the complete streets policy and supporting plans like the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2012). These documents support a network designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and the mobility impaired. Ample opportunity exists to build out the network and make connections to the regional trail systems. This network should encourage travelers to take transit or bike into downtown and become pedestrians once arriving in the core of downtown to create interactive, local streets leading to destinations.

Since mobility is an integrated system, this section is organized by street not by mode of travel which includes:

-  3rd and 4th Street Scenarios
-  2nd Street Cycletrack
-  Main and State Streets
-  Festival streets

## DEMONSTRATIONS



## 3RD & 4TH STREET SCENARIOS

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) intends to improve 3rd and 4th Streets through downtown as both streets are designated as highway corridors. The extent and nature of the project is undefined, requiring this plan to be nimble, showing scenarios that reflect a simple overlay project (replace top layer of the street) to complete replacement of the street and sidewalk.

Funding for the project would be shared between WisDOT and the City. WisDOT covers the roadway, while the City covers items beneath the street and behind the curb to the building.

Public input for the future design of 3rd and 4th Street varied, so multiple concepts were considered. The scenarios form a starting point for discussing a preferred scenario to share with the WisDOT.

Input received:

- Build wider sidewalks for pedestrians
- Retain parking for businesses
- Remove parking for wider sidewalks or bike lanes.
- Add bicycle lanes or protected bicycle lanes
- Convert to two-way circulation
- Keep circulation one-way



**Scenario A:** 2nd Street Cycletrack with no facilities on 3rd and 4th Streets



**Scenario B:** One-way bike lane on left hand side of 3rd and 4th Streets, requiring removal of parking from one side



**Scenario C:** Remove parking on both sides of 3rd and 4th Streets to expand sidewalks to 25 to 30 feet wide

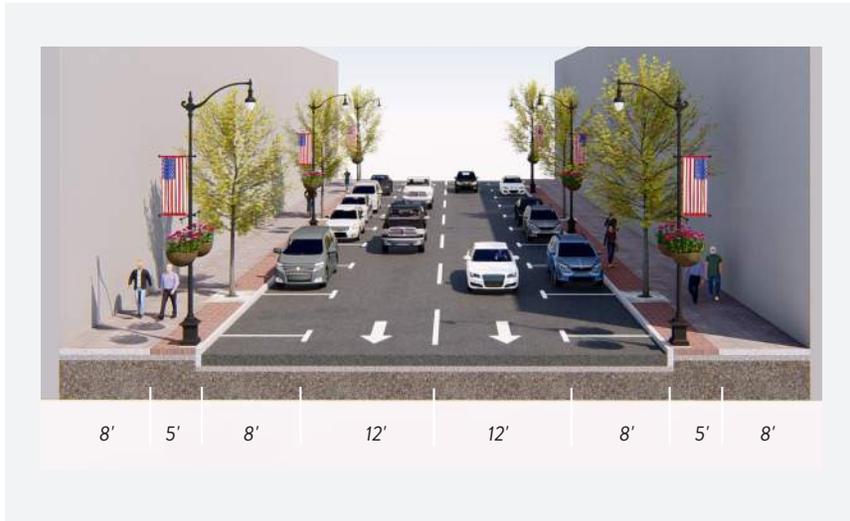


**Scenario D:** One-way pairs on 3rd and 4th become to two-way traffic to encourage commerce, long truck and bus movements, and bicycling-pedestrian safety and mobility

## 3RD & 4TH STREET SCENARIOS

### SCENARIO A: TODAY'S CONFIGURATION

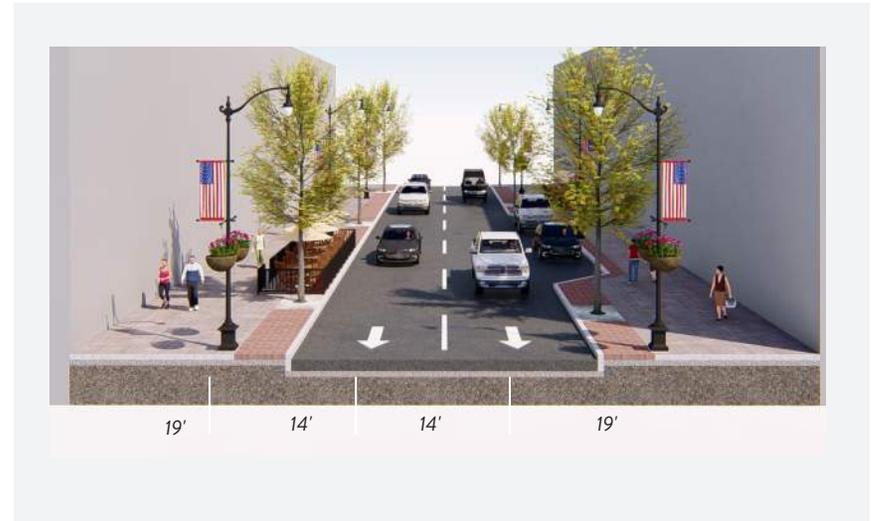
Street project is an overlay resulting in no change.



Scenario shows that the orientation of the street remains. The sidewalk could be expanded a few feet by reducing the width of the travel lines to 11 feet, adding a foot to both sides of the sidewalk.

### SCENARIO B: EXPAND SIDEWALKS

Wider sidewalks with removal of parking.



While wider sidewalks provide an expanded pedestrian zone, customers do not have immediate parking to businesses along the street. The concept shows intermittent parking or drop-off/loading spots.

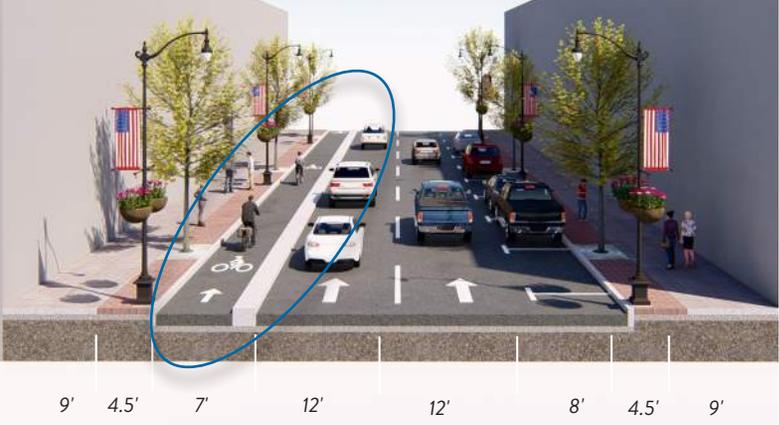
### 3RD & 4TH STREET SCENARIOS

#### SCENARIO C: ADD BIKE LANES

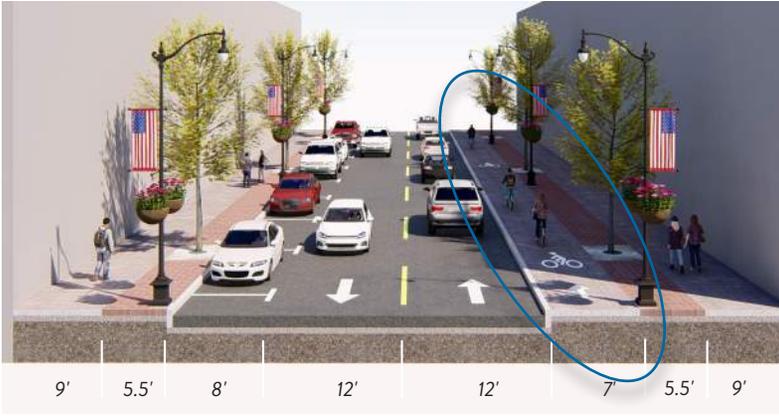
Add bike lanes on 3rd and 4th Streets, requiring removal of parking from one side.



TWO-WAY WITH PARKING



Bike lane can be protected by paint/bollards or by a curb. Alternatively, the lane could be raised to be above the curb as shown in Concept D.



Proceeding with this concept will likely delay the street improvement project beyond 2028 to prepare a traffic study for the one-way to two-way conversion.

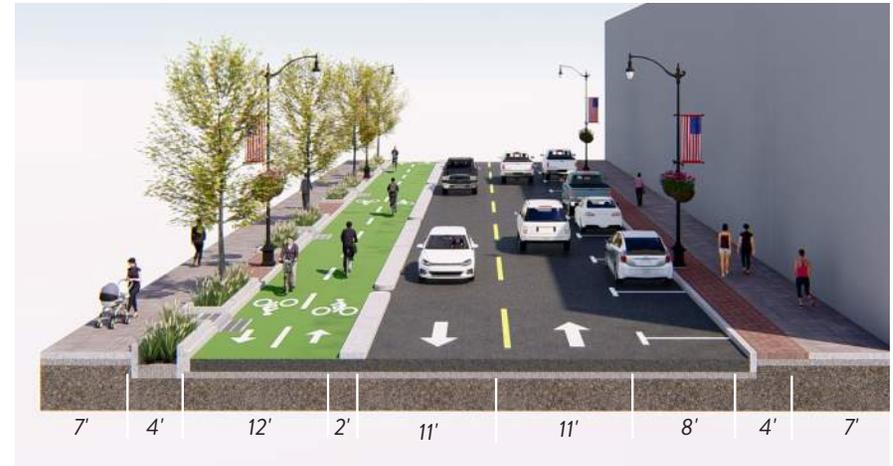
## 2ND STREET CYCLETRACK

2nd Street is shown as a two-way cycletrack on the west side of the street. This barrier-separated bicycle facility provides an uninterrupted route through downtown connecting the Marsh Trails, Riverwalk, and Houska Park.

### PLAN VIEW



### SECTION



The cycletrack on 2nd Street provides parallel circulation to 3rd and 4th Streets, offering

- + Bicyclists have a dedicated space, buffered from moving vehicles
- + Risk of bicyclists getting door dinged from parked cars is removed
- + Adequate space for street trees
- + 2nd Street connects users to the Great River Trail and Gunderson
- Significant amount of impervious surface that increases stormwater runoff
- Less space for pedestrians on 2nd Street
- Reduced parking on 2nd Street by about 70 stalls between Vine and Cass Streets



## 2ND STREET CYCLETRACK - PERSPECTIVE



2nd Street is shown to include a two-way cycletrack on the west side of the street. This barrier-separated bicycle facility would provide an uninterrupted route through downtown, connecting to the regional trail system.

## 2ND STREET CYCLETRACK - MAIN STREET



The aerial perspective of 2nd Street and Main Street shows the cycletrack on the west side of the road. Conflict zones are well-marked, this include ladder-marked crosswalks, contrasting paint in the bike path, and signage. The cycletrack could be separated from other traffic by being placed above the curb or separated by bollards/curb (as shown)

## 2ND STREET CYCLETRACK - TYPICAL INTERSECTION



The aerial perspective shows a typical intersection design with the cycletrack. The pathway is well-marked to alert motorists that slow-moving vehicles are present.

# MAIN & STATE STREETS

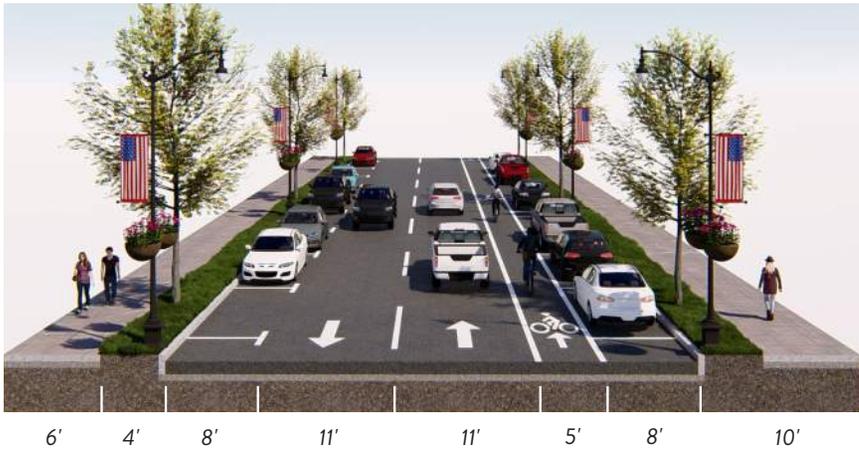
Main Street and State Street are ideal locations for one-way bicycle lanes that create much needed east-west crosstown bicycle access.

Each street can support a standard bicycle lane with painted separation, leaving space for two sided parking along the 42-foot sections, reducing to one lane of parking where the roads narrow to 38-foot sections. This type of street improvement preserves parking for businesses and two-way vehicular traffic.

MAIN STREET CONCEPT TO DOWNTOWN



STATE STREET CONCEPT TO NEIGHBORHOOD



## MAIN STREET BIKE LANE



The concept shows Main Street looking east from 2nd Street.

- Bicycle lane on one-side of the street. Concept shows lane heading eastbound
- Retain parking on both sides of the street
- Improved lighting and landscaping

## STATE STREET BIKE LANE



The concept shows State Street looking east from 8th Street.

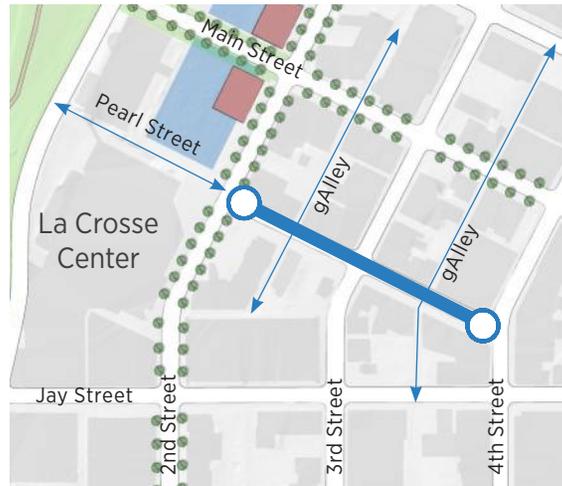
- Bicycle lane on one-side of the street. Concept shows lane heading westbound
- Retain parking on both sides of the street
- Improved lighting and landscaping

## FESTIVAL STREETS

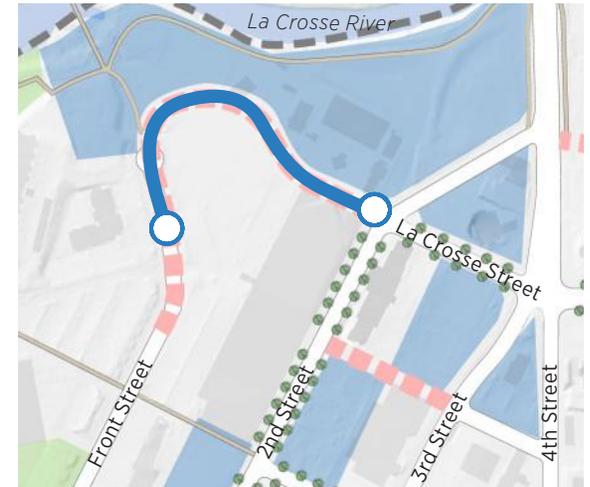
For this plan, Festival Streets are segments of roadways that can be temporarily closed for special events and activities. Otherwise the roadway is open for vehicles to travel. Candidate festival streets in La Crosse include Pearl Street, La Crosse Street Extension, and Veterans Memorial Drive.

Features of La Crosse's future festival streets include:

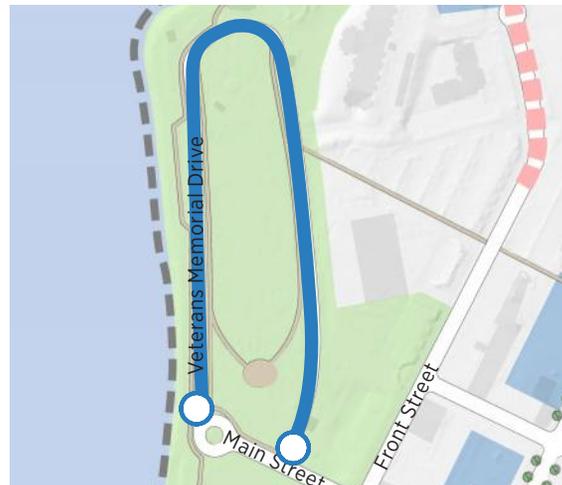
- Mountable curb, meaning that it is subtle or does not exist, eliminating a tripping hazards.
- Emphasis on pedestrian lighting
- Dedicated space for dining
- Gateway feature to alert visitors that they are entering a special district
- Unique barricades to manage vehicle traffic during events
- Pedestrian signage and kiosks
- Street trees for shade
- Power receptacles placed to serve vendors in street, limiting the need for extension cords going across the street
- Stormwater management features that do not introduce new pedestrian hazards



Pearl Street is occasionally closed for special events, and its future redesign can be oriented to festivals..



The future extension of La Crosse Street, between Front Street and 2nd Street, can be closed for Oktoberfest and other special events.



Veteran Memorial Drive can be a festival street or woonerf during events at Riverside Park.



Pine Street, between 8th Street and 13th Street, can be adapted to a woonerf, meaning that traffic is designed for a pedestrian speed.

## PEARL STREET

Pearl Street is the origin of downtown's renaissance for tourism. The expansion of the La Crosse Center will undoubtedly attract more visitors to Pearl Street, presenting an opportunity to leverage this investment and its connection to the Mississippi River.

Stakeholders along Pearl Street met during the planning process to discuss their ideas for the future. Themes of the discussion oriented to activating the street, adjusting parking, and developing projects. Discussion was supplemented by a grassroots publication prepared by a local business owner, TJ Peterslie.

The "Big Idea" for Pearl Street is redesigning the corridor as a festival street, which will allow the road to be temporarily closed to vehicles for special events but otherwise open vehicular traffic. The underground utilities are reportedly inadequate and need replacement, as well. The street may be just as much of a functional improvement as it is a placemaking initiative.

Comparable projects suggest that the magnitude of the initiative could reach \$1.25 million per block should the utilities need replacement. Additional study is needed to understand the conditions and design.

## LA CROSSE STREET

Extending La Crosse Street to connect to Front Street provides greater accessibility to underused site near the La Crosse River. Opening this connection will improve the marketability of the area for



Photo courtesy of Chamber of Commerce

new development, and improve clarity to accessing property.

The La Crosse Street extension can be a festival street that is closed during Oktoberfest. The pathway can become a staging area for vendors or a spine route for pedestrian circulation. The street design should involve event coordinators to ensure that its implementation limits future obstructions for vendors (loading and setup) and activities.

## VETERAN'S MEMORIAL DRIVE

During special events at Riverside Park and at the band shell, Veteran's Memorial Drive behaves as a woonerf or festival street. Woonerfs are streets where vehicles and pedestrians share the roadway, moving at a pedestrian pace.

Bump-outs and speed tables should be

retrofitted into the street, particularly between the river walk and green space, to improve the safety of pedestrians.

For special events at the park, clear pathways should be identified for people with mobility impairments. This may require some additional surfaced pathways into the green space.

## PINE STREET PATHWAY

The Pine Street Pathway is an east-west pedestrian route with Western Technical College as the fulcrum. The pathway connects the western neighborhoods to the riverfront. Pine Street, west of Western Technical College, could be retrofitted as a woonerf. This means that improvements to the roadway naturally encourage drivers to move at a slower speed since more pedestrians are present in the corridor. Speed tables, signage, and bump-outs are common along woonerfs.

# FESTIVAL STREET - PEARL STREET





## OPPORTUNITIES



### CASE STUDY

## FESTIVAL STREETS

Bethesda, Maryland  
[www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org)

Bethesda, Maryland programs a number of activities that occupy their streets throughout the year, primarily on Woodmont Avenue and Elm Street but also other streets. These events include:

- Taste of Bethesda
- Bethesda Outdoor Movies
- Summer Concert Series
- Fine Arts Festival
- Winter Wonderland
- Children's Street Festival



SPEED TABLE ON VETERAN'S MEMORIAL DRIVE



### CASE STUDY

## WOONERFS

Washington D.C.  
Wharf Street

Wharf Street in the District Wharf is a woonerf, a dutch term for a living street or recreation street. While vehicles can drive along the street, vehicles are restricted to walking speeds and pedestrians often occupy the path. The image below shows pedestrian scaled lighting, available parking distinguished by pavers, and no curb.



MOUNTABLE CURB

### PROGRAM FUNDING FOR ENHANCED STREETS

Projects include:

3rd and 4th Street Redesign

2nd Street Cycletrack

Main and State Streets

### SYNCHRONIZE SIGNAL TIMING

Traffic flow relies on appropriate signal timing. A study should be conducted to determine where and how to update signal timing to ensure proper flows through downtown without causing increased congestion.

### IDENTIFY INTERSECTIONS FOR SAFETY AND COMFORT UPGRADES

The process for identifying intersections should consider frequently traveled pedestrian paths and areas presenting obstacles for people with mobility impairments..

# PARKING

Customers arriving by automobile want visible and convenient parking near their destination otherwise they perceive a lack of parking and can be deterred from patronizing business in the area.

The City commissioned a study on downtown parking in early 2020. The findings show:

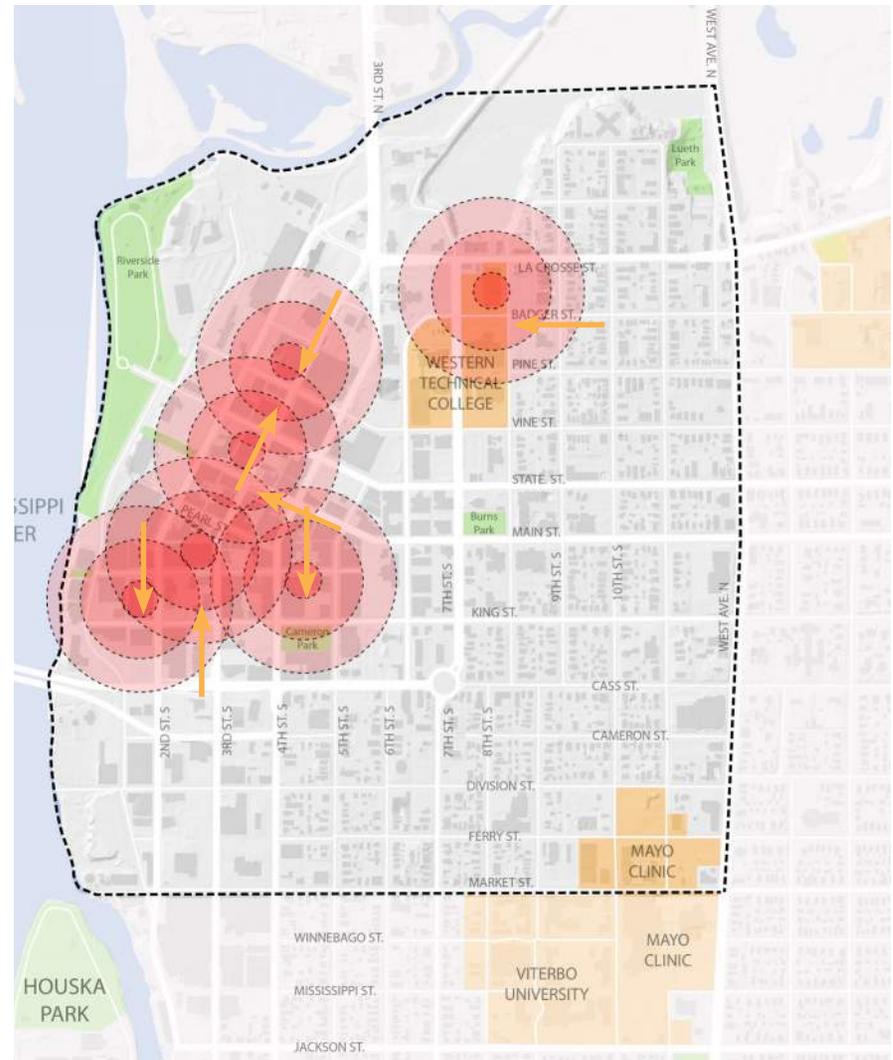
- **A surplus of parking exists.** Downtown has 9,129 parking stalls available and 52% of the parking is public.
- **Parking shortage is a perception, not a reality.** Employees parking in the on-street spaces in front of stores contributes to the perception of lack of available parking for customers. Many patrons avoid parking in the garages, despite the less than 5 minute walk to nearly all parts of downtown as shown in the map to the right.
- **Parking utilization rates are low.** During peak time (12:00pm-2:00pm) less than 50% of the available public spaces in downtown were occupied. At its highest point, off-street spaces reached 42% occupancy while on-street reached 45%.

The parking study includes 30 actions to improve conditions, which most are achievable with minimal investment. Actions that are already under consideration are identified on the next page.

Imagine 2040 spotlights four recommendations from the parking study as high-priority initiatives, including:

- Adopt pay-for-parking
- **Initiate** a downtown wayfinding program.
- Establish a parking benefits district
- Manage parking **by zones**

WALKING TIMES FROM PUBLIC PARKING GARAGES



LEGEND



## ADOPT PAY-FOR-PARKING

A strategy to encourage on-street parking turnover is by charging fees for parking. This system is already in effect adjacent to the colleges with the Pay-to-Park areas to reduce on-street parking congestion. A similar application could be expanded to the commercial core.

Pricing could be connected to supply and demand, fluctuating with use over time and by area. This helps account for the hidden costs of free parking and encourage more downtown customers to consider walking, biking, or taking transit and lessens the number of motorists circling the block for an open spot. Also it discourages employees from parking in stalls that serve businesses.

By adopting pay-for-parking, downtown should establish a Parking Benefit District. Fees collected from the parking can be recycled into future improvements for the district.

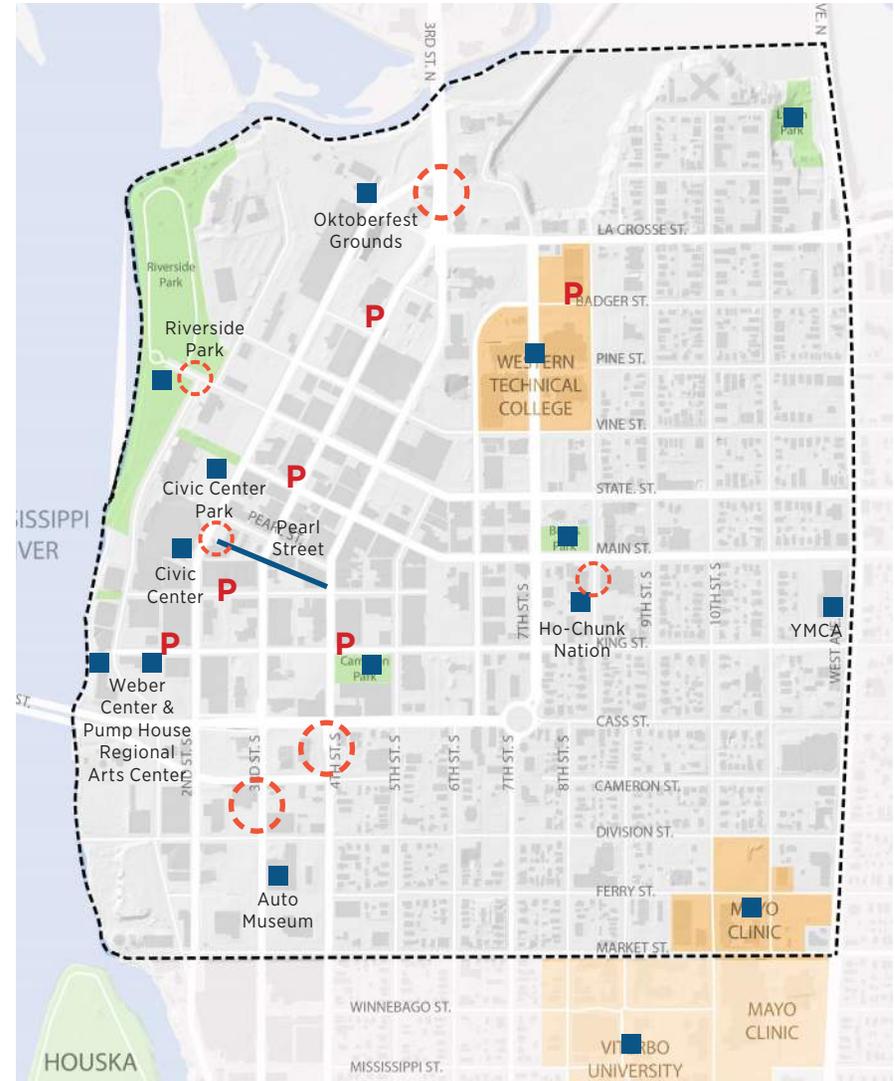
## INITIATE A WAYFINDING PROGRAM

Finding destinations quickly and easily is important to a thriving business district. Three types of signage work together in a wayfinding program to achieve these results.

- **Gateway Signs.** Gateway signs welcome visitors to the district. These signs can be basic panel signs or be designed as artistic gateway features.
- **Vehicle-oriented Signs.** Vehicle-oriented signs help direct motorists to major destinations and areas to park their vehicle. The design should follow design standards set by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.
- **Pedestrian-oriented Signs.** Pedestrian-oriented signs help direct people to destinations. Placement should be near decision-making points for travelers. Kiosks could be placed near major gathering spaces, such as Riverside Park and the La Crosse Center.

The system should be master planned to ensure rhythm between all modes of transportation. Bicycle-oriented signs should also be considered and have rhythm with the city's trail signage system.

## PRELIMINARY GATEWAY AND WAYFINDING DESTINATIONS



- Gateway
- Destinations

**PARKING STUDY ACTIONS UNDER REVIEW**

TYPE	NUMBER	RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
PARKING GUIDANCE	1.1	Install LPR counter system in ramps	Looking at funding options to install cameras on ramp entrances/exits
	1.2	Install counter system display signs at each ramp and along main thoroughfares into the Downtown	
SIGNAGE	2.1	Install on-street signs directing patrons to the ramps throughout the city	Have discussed improved signage with DMI; looking at website updates to make parking options more clear
	2.2	Install directional exit signs in ramps that inform users which street they are exiting onto and which street is to the left/right	Installing better signage in ramps with exiting directional information
	2.3	Clearly identify ramp levels and amenities by incorporating different colors or art themes per ramp/floor	Ramps are currently color coded, but will be implementing a more consistent color coding system
	2.4	Install on-street and ramp signs directing users to bicycle parking	
PASSPORT SYSTEM	3.1	Utilize LPR from 1.1 above to automatically register users and start 3-hour free parking upon entry into the ramp	Exploring addition of sign occupancy levels ahead of entering downtown; possible plate reader upon garage entrance to automatically register 3 hours free to avoid pay stations or apps
RAMP PERMIT SYSTEM	4.1	Allow monthly ramp permit holders to park in any ramp (except Riverside) between 2nd and roof (overflow only) level	Will consider this option if LPR counter systems are installed in the ramps; in the meantime, wait lists on Main and Pine Street ramps was abolished
	4.3	Implement reduced rate employee permit parking on top floor of ramps	Launched the Downtown Employee Parking Permit summer 2020 designed for part-time employees, interns, low income employees reducing fee by half to \$20/month
SAFE PARK	7.1	Implement a Safe Park program	Not considering until pandemic is under control
ON-STREET	8.2	Add 15-minute loading zones where appropriate	Implemented curbside pickup/delivery in March, extended through April 2021
PARKING BENEFITS DISTRICT	11.0	Implement parking benefits district as requested by neighborhood groups	Considering this option, but need either the neighborhood group or DMI to request
PARKING SYSTEM ECONOMICS	14.0	Implement a full paid parking system with paid on-street (future)	Only in early discussions

## MANAGE PARKING BY ZONES

### DOWNTOWN CORE

Parking turnover helps drive retail sales in commercial district. By restricting the time motorists can park their vehicle at one location it encourages them to move their car allowing other shoppers to use the space and patronize the business. With ample coverage and availability in the garages, a zoned parking system, restricting parking times in certain areas could encourage more long term visitors to park their vehicles in the garage, freeing up on-street stalls for short term shoppers. A zoned system could include:

- Front, Pearl and Main Streets: 60 minutes
- 3rd and 4th Streets: 90 minutes
- Cass to La Crosse Street, Front to 6th Street: 2 hours

### NEIGHBORHOODS

Outside the downtown core, parking in the residential areas can be a challenge resulting from a high number of college students. Many college towns and larger urban cities implement a residential parking permit program to manage the concern. In downtown, two systems operate:

- **Residential Permit.** Allows permanent residents in the district to park on-street free of charge.
- **Pay to Park.** Located on the blocks immediately surrounding the higher education facilities, these streets require payment if a residential permit is not displayed.

The Parking Study recommends expanding the Pay to Park boundaries in some locations, however not within the boundaries of the downtown plan. If the Pay to Park boundaries are expanded, the study recommends expanding the residential parking permit program as well to prevent pushing the parking problem further into the neighborhood.



## OPPORTUNITIES

### ESTABLISH A PARKING BENEFITS DISTRICT

Guidelines are already in place to implement a parking benefits district (PBD) in downtown. Downtown Mainstreet Inc., working with the Parking Utility staff, should explore implementation of the PBD. An appointed board will be necessary to manage the district.

Funding from the benefit district can be used to build the proposed projects in this plan, including the wayfinding program, streetscape maintenance and amenities.

### CONSIDER REVENUE BONDS TO FUND THE RAMP LPR COUNTER SYSTEM

Revenue bonds, backed by funds from paid parking or the parking benefit district, could be used to fund installation of the LPR Counter System. This system will streamline ramp usage by removing the barrier or registration for use of the free 3 hour parking, or approaching a full garage. This system will help free up short-term on-street parking by encourage more use of garage parking.

### DESIGN DIRECTIONAL WAYFINDING

A community wayfinding system should be coordinated, themed, and include three types:

