

Date: July 17th, 2025

Time: 1:00 pm

Organization: 360 Real Estate

- Small boutique development company; most employees are the management side (manage the buildings we develop; management portfolio). Do everything in house.
- Always looking at things from the perspective of what's good for the customer, neighborhood, city.
- Not attracted to greenfield; focus on infill and adaptive re-use.
- Primarily multi-family mixed use development.

Interviewees: Jeremy & Marvin

- Question to the team: What are the metrics the city will use to assess that this process was successful? What is the process for accountability?
 - Identify metrics that we can use to assess that the project is moving in the right direction.
 - Potential metrics:
 - Housing unit development (in line with what is recommended in the housing study).
 - Reduction in approval process time.
 - reduction in variances (old code would have required it, new code doesn't).

Questions

1. What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?

- a. First test case for the TND ordinance.
- b. "the code is always the stick and never the carrot."
 - i. Build more creatively and character into the code.
- c. We have rationed housing through approval and process.
 - i. "it should be damn near impossible to ration housing in this country. And we are all paying the price. We ration where people can live."

2. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.

- a. "If there was one major issue I could change in this city is disfunction within City Hall (Council and Administration; organizational structure)."
 - i. We could have a perfect code, and staff would still be hamstrung.
 - ii. Tim and the Planning department can't reach their true potential because of dysfunction.
 - iii. Hire an Administrator and shrink the council to 7. Pay Councilors what they are worth. PC citizen members don't get anything. Increase the qualifications of the Councilors.
- b.

- 3. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide, encourage, support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?**
- a. Move things to the staff level and away from the Council level.
 - i. Or for large projects, get council approval on the front end (meets comp plan objectives), and then work with staff, whereas the opposite is true currently.
 - 1. This would help us not overextend ourselves financially.
 - 2. Spend half a million dollars on something before we even get a yes and we never know for certain how the process is gonna go.
 - b. Flexibility is key. The most decision making can stay at the staff level, the better.
 - i. Get out of staff's way.
 - c. Think strategically about where we want to be in 10, 15 years and how we want to get there.
- 4. Would changes in the code allow a broader range of housing types (re: "missing middle") to be developed?**
- a.

Date: July 16th, 2025

Time: 4:00 pm

Organization: Borton Construction

- Unicorn in the construction world because we are mid-size (50 field staff). Commercial builder but doing more upper end residential. Design-build.
- \$25-30 mill annual company. Worked in 14 states over the last 20 years. Doing more multi-family and affordable housing. Our niche is food service. Also do a lot of higher ed food service work (dining halls, food courts).
 - Washburn waived all fees for a large affordable housing project they worked on.

Interviewees: Paul Borshiem (helped write the commercial design standards)

Questions

1. **What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?**
 - a. It feels like the goal line keeps changing or its applied differently. We have a very good relationship with city planning, but 80% of our problems end up in the engineering dept.
 - i. Ex. Badger Corgie – met with planning and inspections for a pre-construction/design mtg. Implemented that and are two weeks away from being done building and then engineering says we have to do it another way (even after permits were issued). 1 person holding up the project at the very end is very frustrating. Once projects are approved, the city can't be making changes.
 - ii. There are silos even within engineering. Its not my job to tell city hall how to manage the engineering department. It seems like there isn't really one person running the department.
 - b. In the city of Onalaska, the process runs more smoothly and once its approved they never go back on it. I think it helps that there seems to be one person running ship on the whole project across the city departments.
 - c. Everyone's mentioned stormwater issues – "amen"
 - i. Yuri lives in a black and white world but the real world is grey.
 - ii. La Crosse's stormwater management is on steroids in comparison to every other city.
 - iii. The city is going beyond state requirements. This will drive projects away from the city of La Crosse.*** (ex. sprinkler requirements, which greatly can drive up the cost of insurance).
 - d. TIFF and Development Agreements: working with the City Attorney is next to impossible and there is no negotiation (its brutal). We're not getting a copy of the agreement until hours before the meeting and we have issues with it and then look bad in front of council for bringing them up.
 - i. Brutal honesty: I think he's lazy.

- ii. Previous City Attorney was easier to work with, but at least you could get a meeting with him. Now it's a black hole.

2. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.

- a. La Crosse is on the high end of permitting fees.
 - i. One year the mil rate didn't increase, so all the fees had to increase.
 - ii. Top 10% of fees regionally per square feet in the communities we've worked with.
 - iii. \$3,600 vs. \$900 for the same permit between La Crosse and Shelby. I also saved weeks in process time.

3. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide/encourage/support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?

- a. We don't have greenspace available for SFH. Therefore, we have to acquire enough properties to develop.
- b. There needs to be an understanding of what can be done when we don't have enough land to do greenfield development (education).
- c. I'm not sure if it's even attainable even more for the \$50k-\$100k household income range to even own anymore.
 - i. Condo projects with a TIFF might be the only way to make something affordable at this price point.
- d. There are a lack of industrial sites available, so they are going to other communities.

4. Would changes in the code allow a broader range of housing types (re: "missing middle") to be developed?

5. Active Projects in La Crosse

- a. Considering building an office warehouse for our company in town (first step of that discussion).
 - i. Fire district limits are causing issues with the potential process here.
- b. Potential private school work (rehab and small addition)
- c. 7 Copeland (Riverpoint)
 - i. Interest rates and construction costs are a double whammy issue.

6. Paul was a part of a committee that developed the commercial design standards.

- a. Council members were also on the committee which was really smart. All the developers were on board and it sailed through easily.
- b. Only issue is the loss of the parking standards. I'm surprised about the "0" parking requirement. 80% of people will do the right thing, but some people won't provide anything and then it will create issues that are difficult to resolve once implemented.

7. Magic Wand

- a. Single point of contact to facilitate the process (more administrative approval). Less Council approval and say in the process.
 - i. When I have this in other communities, it's really helpful and simplifies the process.

Date: July 21st, 2025

Time: 4:00 pm

Organization: BOZA

Interviewees: Ben, Douglas, Jim, Anatasia, James

Questions

1. What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?

- a. Douglas: two major issues that we hear are floodplain (our hands are tied by DNR; 800 properties in N and 1,000 in S that are affected by floodplain issues) and setbacks.
 - i. Setbacks – developed over different times, so there are a range of lot sizes, but the same constraints are put on the tiny lots as the large one.
 - ii. We need to empower building and inspections in making more judgement calls.
- b. Mr. Farmer: we are expected to issue waivers when the lots are small, but we are not expected to grant waivers down by the marsh when folks have tons of space.
 - i. We are subject to criticism based on the direction the code sends us.
 - ii. “planning was very happy to criticize BOZA, but they didn’t ever come to the meetings.”
 - iii. When I was on council I pointed out inconsistencies.
 - iv. Inconsistency: if they want wood steps, have to get a waiver from us. Concrete steps, no waiver. Same with wood vs. concrete decks. Causes headaches.
 1. Standards that are in the zoning code.
 - v. Nothing annoys me more than when BOZA asks inspections what the reasoning is behind a rule, and no one has one. “I don’t make the rules I just enforce them.” **this damages our credibility a lot**
- c. James: process issues. The current code is incoherent; stuff is located in lots of different places. Leads to people doing work without permits. The public doesn’t even know what is or not allowed.
 - i. “I have to spend 1-2 hours trying to figure things out myself”
 - ii. Whatever the final format is, municode won’t cut it. We need something that is user friendly. Need folks to be able to put their property into a system and then the regs that that apply to them pop up.
 - iii. Clean up the code and make it more accessible to the public.
- d. Anatasia: when someone is denied an appeal or told to move a sign (for ex), there is no policing or enforcement. What was the point of having the zoning appeal in the first place when nothing happened?
 - i. Enforcement shouldn’t come from us. We just make the decisions.
- e. Ben: what I’ve heard from the public is that the zone feels like the “wild west.” Inconsistent application, enforcement. Confusing. People aren’t building because it’s difficult to know what the rules are.

2. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.

- a. Difficult navigation
 - i. Ex. three different standards for vision triangle.
- b. Last June, your packet was 300 pages long. Is this something we could improve on?
 - i. I like more information than less.
 - ii. “the applicant has the burden of proof. So I wouldn’t do anything to restrict their case.”
- c. “we have a lean board in terms of membership.” Leads to more referrals.
- d. “the board doesn’t have any constituents. We shouldn’t think of the applicants this way. We need to be as independent and impartial as possible.”
- e. Detached garages: 2 ft set back vs attached garages: 6 ft setback.
 - i. Another example of inconsistency and arbitrariness (no one has an explanation or why)
- f. “I have no training in zoning.”
- g. ****gotta get rid of the conditional use permits.****
 - i. Under new legal standards, we’ll never have the legal evidence to deny a CU
 - ii. Opens the city up to litigation
 - iii. Opens up politics to a process that should be technical.
- h. Jenna: we did get rid of most of our conditional use code maybe 2 things left).

3. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide/encourage/support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?

- a.

4. Would changes in the code allow a broader range of housing types (re: “missing middle”) to be developed?

- a. Not long ago the council asked for a resolution asking for more ADUs; not sure in practicality many people have explored it. But its good to lay the groundwork.
 - i. Height restrictions are limiting the ADU ordinance (carriage house issue)
- b. Tiny homes are not allowed within city limits. I see their value especially since they are less permanent. Can’t think of areas except downtown where tiny homes couldn’t fit into the properties. It should be the prerogative of the property owner.
 - i. Tiny homes could fall under the ADU ordinance or be an alternative to the ADU
 - ii. Could be easier to remove or move.

5. Magic Wand – changes you’d like to see

- a. 200 some odd airbnbs in the scattered across the city/neighborhoods.

- i. “I live next door to one.” I’m the night clerk. I’m the one who really knows whose there. Creates a security/public safety problem. Never have to furnish a drivers license to get into a Airbnb but you would to get into a hotel.
 - ii. Gradually swiss cheesing our neighborhoods. Has never come up to BOZA, but I hope that the code could address this.
 - 1. If I was still on the council this is the issue I would bring up.
 - iii. Dream: Zero lot lines, ease height restrictions... “but its never gonna happen”
 - iv. New construction is required to have a garage; that may not be the best policy for folks with small lots.
- b. Accessibility and understanding. My wife and I purchased a home 4 years ago and we haven’t done a lot of work because its so hard to know what you can do.
- c. Our downtown is very heavily regulated. If I rent or own a commercial building, I can only convert 1/3 of the ground floor.
 - i. I think some of these ground level commercial storefronts might be better served as residential townhome.
 - ii. And some businesses could be upstairs.
 - iii. Could make for a more vibrant downtown if we allow more flexibility.

Date: July 17th, 2025

Time: 10:00 am

Organization: Building & Inspections Department

Interviewees: Department Staff

Questions

1. What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?

- a. **moving the sign code into the zoning code.
- b. Andy:
 - i. TND development density (40 units /acre). Leads to a lot of variances.
 - ii. Washburn district—is it necessary to have it's own thing? No reason to have it.
 - iii. Vision clearance triangle.
 1. Amended the ordinance to accommodate one person.
 - iv. Put everything together into one spot.
 - v. Limit on the number of unrelated people. Leads to rezonings to allow for more unrelated people.
 - vi. Size requirements for bedrooms → that's currently in Chap. 103 (building code), should that be in the zoning code?
 - vii. Wood fence and vinyl fence not allowed in the commercial zone (only chain link). Do we even need a fence code?
 1. Example, trash enclosures. Either has to meet the code or go for a variance.
 2. Conflict between the design standards and the actual fence code.
 3. Fire dept, might have had a play in it
 - viii. Height/areas recommendations are in its own section; move them into each zoning district.
 - ix. If a fence is abutting a public sidewalk it can only 4 ft, solid. But "abutting" is not defined.
 - x. Garages: 8 ft door and 10 ft wall restrictions, but the total height is restricted to 17 ft.
 1. "we want it to be black and white: you can go up to 20 ft"
- c. Only inspected 2 ADUs; one was a remodel
 - i. 1 slab on grade
 - ii. 1 above a garage
 - iii. No off-street parking requirements.
 - iv. Limited to the number of accessory units you are allowed.

2. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.

- a. Reading the code itself isn't easy, especially the normal person. Hard to decipher.

- i. Should be clear for your mom or grandma to read it.
 - ii. Lot's of cross-sectioning.
 - b. The City of Onalaska is better organized. For ex. for section for accessory structures.
 - c. Height restrictions are located in a lot of different places.
 - d. Multi-family and commercial design approval process. Something more official or streamlined.
 - i. People come in to apply for permits, but its unclear if they are approved or not.
 - ii. Folks don't understand the process after final design review.
 - e. Strike the satellite disj code (out dated). Sec. 115-397.
 - f. Need to update wireless communications facilities code. Sec. 115-439.
 - g. Noxious weeds—not defined.
 - i. Pollinator gardens aren't defined int eh code and people get cited for them.
 - ii. You can't even technically have bushes.
 - h. Properties are supposed to be seeded or sodded in the residential zone.
 - i. CAN'T touch the floodplain ordinance because it's a model ord. from the DNR.
 - j. It would be nice to have FAQs on the city website. So they don't have to even go into the code; to cut down on miscommunication.
 - i. Lots of general things that could be addressed.
 - k. Code has a lot of jargon; cutting it down would be helpful. (more so in the non-zoning/sub chapter).
 - l. Driveway can only be as wide as the garage door; causes issues.
 - m. Sec. 115-339: second garages. Convolutd.
- 3. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide/encourage/support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?
 - a.
- 4. Would changes in the code allow a broader range of housing types (re: “missing middle”) to be developed?

Date: July 16th, 2025

Time: 1:00 pm

Organization: DBS Group – Design Build Construction

- Work in Rochester and La Crosse

Interviewees: Kyle Olson, Greg Towner (also a developer), and Matt Gobel

Questions

1. What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?

b. Not so many issues, but things we've stumbled on:

- Stormwater standards: identifying early on when projects will be susceptible to certain requirements. Guidance would be beneficial.
- Parking previously has been an issue (no longer; no set min requirement).
- City staff is very helpful when I need help finding certain things on the website or code
 - ***a flowchart would be very helpful***
 - Pre-development meeting with staff are always very helpful.
- Parking required behind the building; would be nice to make exceptions when there are issues preventing this in implementation without a variance.
- "The code as its written isn't terribly difficult to figure out if you are used to reading them. I've worked in areas that are far more challenging."
 - Ex. of more challenging places
 - Other communities have a lot of third-party consultants so its hard to know who really is in charge (smaller community).
 - Larger municipalities (Rochester) have a very extensive PW Dept. that is very tricky to navigate.
- Greg (developer standpoint): it would be helpful to know what all the fees are across the board and ahead of time. It would also be helpful to have an understanding of timeframes (feels like a mystery a lot of time).

2. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.

- Not ran into many challenges in La Crosse specifically.
- Lessons learned from other communities: PUDs are becoming a lot more common. There is interest in La Crosse too.
 - Communities are saying its easier to get a PUD rather than work within the existing zoning.
 - Most of the time they are larger parcels of units of land.

- e. The application process is straightforward for the most part. Used to have a list of dates when the meetings are held and the dates they need to be submitted by but had to call city staff to find a copy of it.
 - f. Can there be one person/point of contact that walks the developer through the whole process?
 - i. Not really because it has to move through different departments.
- 3. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide/encourage/support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?**
- g. Common question: why can't I have an apartment on my first floor?
- 4. Would changes in the code allow a broader range of housing types (re: "missing middle") to be developed?**
- h. Getting more into assisted living housing development. 90% of clients are relationships based.
 - i. Active projects in La Crosse:
 - i. Remodel work/renovations → not a lot of zoning issues come up with this work.
 - ii. Done some ground up mixed-use projects; one project is slated to begin next year (remodel of the old holiday inn before the convention center)
 - iii. Most work right now is in surrounding states.
- 5. Magic wand**
- j. Big fan of creating a uniform structure for code. Rochester just implemented a UDC.
 - i. Its helpful when communities have similar structures to their codes
 - k. Identifying sunk costs and impact fees upfront is crucial.
 - l. No magic wand for financing unfortunately.
 - i. Would respond to incentives for sure. Have projects that they are waiting on are the owners getting the last bit of funding.

Date: July 17th, 2025

Time: 2:00 pm

Organization: Engineering Department

Interviewees: Staff- Matt, Stephanie, Brian, Yuri, Jamie, Tina; Ellen (Legal)

Questions

1. What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?

- a. Need to fix mobile cell tower regulations that are in the zoning code; this will lead to some revisions in chapter 40 (ROW management) it would be best to do them at the same time.
 - i. It's very preemptive.
 - ii. Engineering staff is reviewing everything except industrial and light industrial (and some instances of small resi).
- b. Utility code is really the state code.
- c. Design review is great, but industrial is falling through the cracks (Kwik Trip just keeps expanding and buying up properties).
 - i. They don't have to go through a review process.
 - ii. Some customers don't have metered water.
 - iii. Inspections also thinks that bringing industrial into the design review process would be helpful.
 - 1. Light industrial gets review if tis along a corridor.
 - iv. We just want a consistent process
 - v. Would help us catch problems and inconsistencies earlier (and not after construction has started, which has happened a few times).
- d. UW is subject to city zoning – its one of the only local regs they are actually subject to.
- e. Kyle: my struggle is opposite that many in this room. My struggle is our own internal process (interdepartmental). Making sure everyone who needs to see it, sees it. The process is buried.
 - i. Process needs to be consistent and enforceable.
 - ii. The sheer language of our ordinance is different to follow.
 - iii. Utilities gets left out of the subdivision plat process.
 - iv. Intergov—as a potential solution.

2. Developers

- a. Is the problem the developers or the consultants they hire? The experience is inconsistent.
 - i. Some just don't seem to get the basics (ex. parking lot standards). Leads us to having to through things over and over again.
 - ii. Parks review landscaping for basic compliance
 - iii. Lighting layouts. Expect the city to move.
 - 1. Design standards should reference broader standard bearer.

- 2. “Try to keep the dark sky people at bay.” We follow a lot of those standards/best practices anyway. There are dark sky advocates in the community.
- iv. “Its all about money. They use the cheapest consultants, but then we have to deal with their mistakes.”
 - 1. What should have been 1-2 submittals, turns into 5.
 - 2. The engineering dept also wants to avoid re-work. But we find sometimes they just don’t follow the city specs. (we are saying the same thing, to the same people, over and over again).
- v.

3. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.

- a. Different zoning districts are treated differently by staff.
 - i. Not a consistent way across the districts of being reviewed by staff.
 - ii.

4. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide/encourage/support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?

- a.

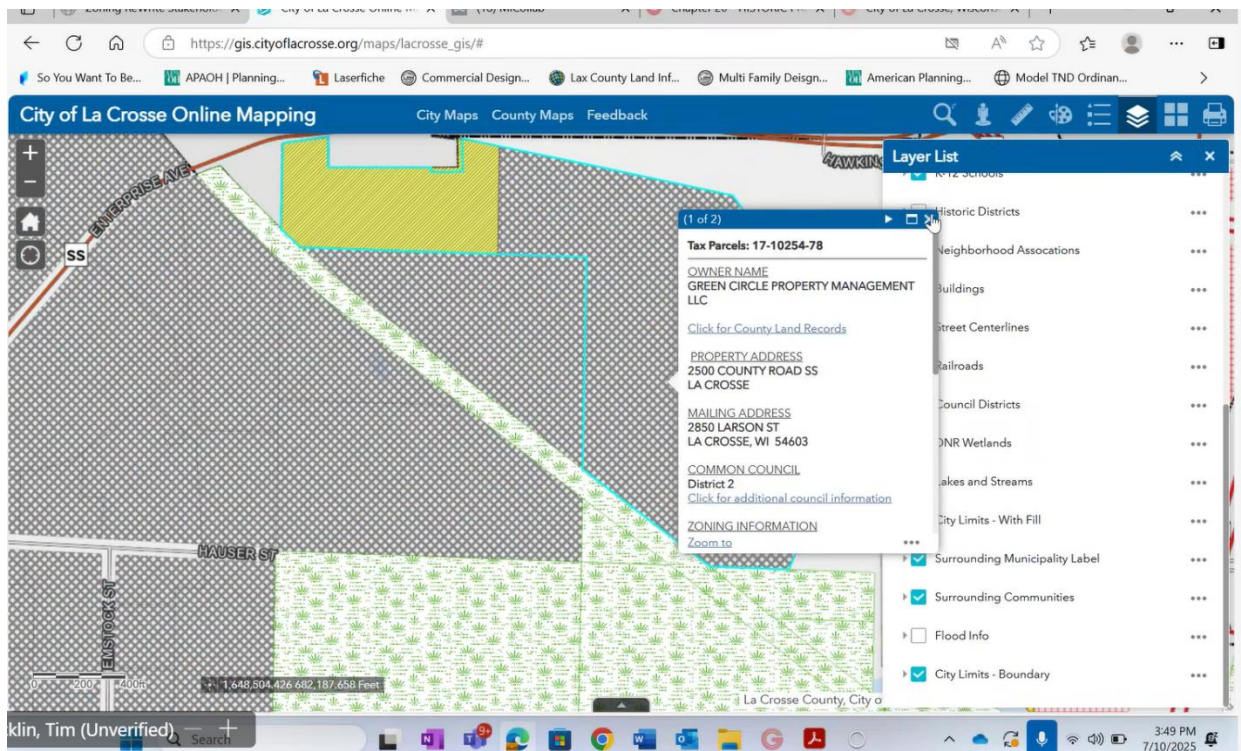
5. Would changes in the code allow a broader range of housing types (re: “missing middle”) to be developed?

- a.

Friends of the Marsh, Stakeholder Focus Group – 7/10/2025 Stakeholder Focus Group

Intros:

- Ralph K: board member
 - Chuck Lee: pres. of board, founder
 - Sue: Board member
 - Rebecca: newest board member works for a nonprofit near the marsh
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- Define what you mean by “the marsh”
 - Our mission concerns the riparian marsh within city limits
 - Heavy industrial zoning is located within the northern portion of the wetland.
 - We shouldn’t be building within flood fringe, floodway, etc.
 - In the south: residential, commercial zoning that intrudes into the marsh
 - “The edges are not clean”
 - Riverpoint district: some land has been transferred to parks that needs to be zoned for conservancy
 - “To the north there is contradictory zoning”
 - “How do we re-zone private property?” especially in the north
 - Expectation from owners to develop, but it located within the flood fringe/floodway; how do we get around private property?
 - Example of contradictory zoning: heavy industrial in the northern portion of the marsh
 - Don’t want any development of any kind in the floodway/fringe
 - Property owner is still trying to figure out what to do with the land
 - Zoning is one way to protect the land.
 - Lots of heavy equipment is being stored that they can be moved when there’s a flood; high potential for contamination.

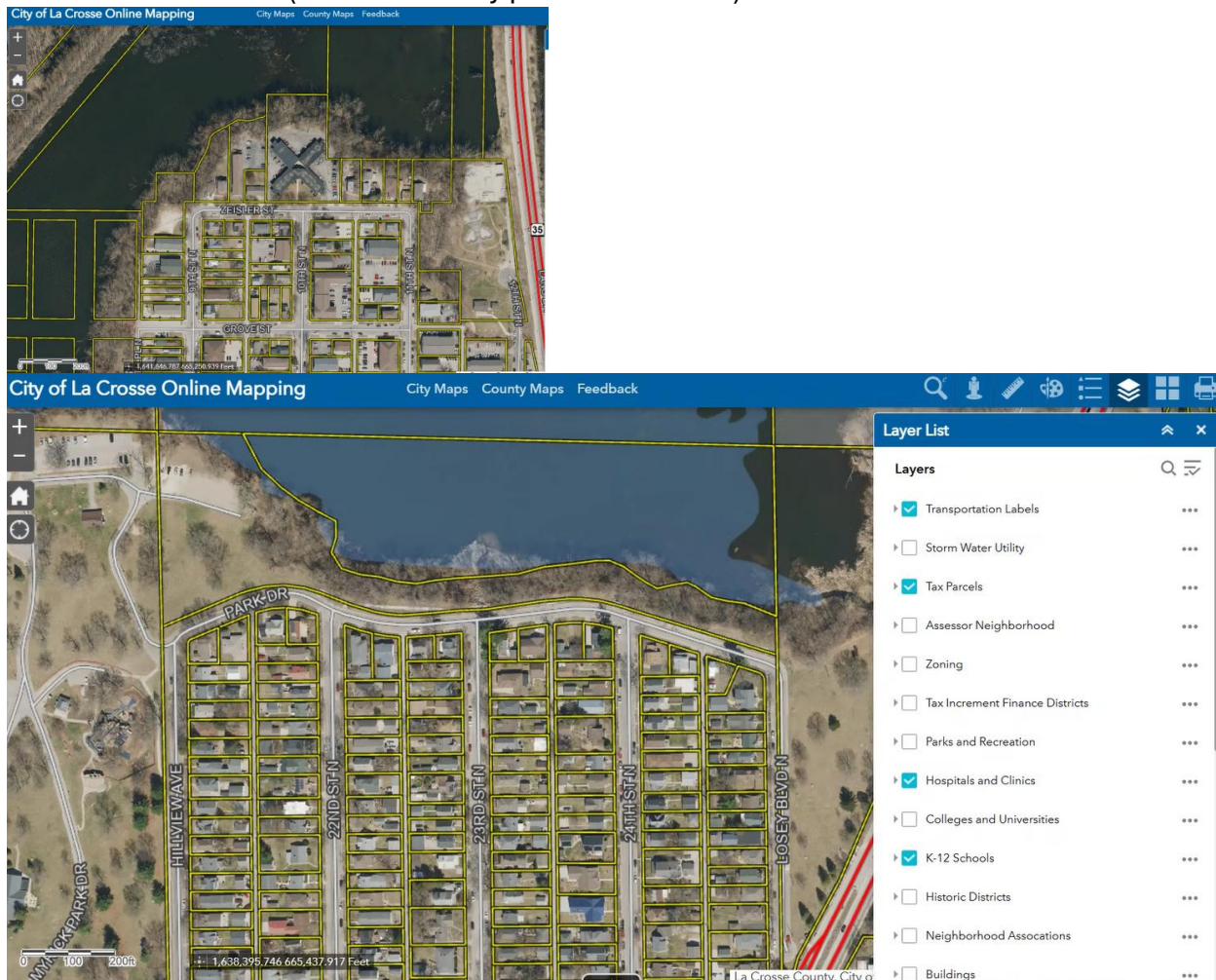


- This process is just updating the code; afterwards, will be the process of actually updating the zoning map, which is where individual property owners could appeal a potential rezoning of their property.
 - This will be mid-to late next year (late summer early fall)
 - The code update process will wrap up the middle of next year.
- Boundaries & riparian areas:

- MN root river riparian plan (across the river)
 - Goal: 50 ft of perennial greenspace on either side of the river, with incentives for landowners. Could this be done by ordinance?
 - Pervious buffer that can't be altered
- Overlapping/Abutting jurisdictions:
 - The city vs. the DNR
 - Town of Medary has jurisdiction of a small portion of the marsh and has no rules about potential discharge into the river/marsh (guns, hunting).
 - This might have to be dealt with in a parallel process.
- Drive La Crosse St along the south end of the campus; nature place; rain gardens; lateral retention basin planted with natives → good examples of improved stormwater management
 - Multi-family developments require on site/parcel stormwater management (another good practice)
 - Example of apartments that get permits from the DNR to discharge their runoff into the marsh
 - The Nature Place is a city property; used as an example to demonstrate best practices (bioswale as a buffer for runoff)
- **question for Uri in engineering → exceptions to stormwater management
- Development has been driven to the edge of the city because of the restrictions on redevelopment and dominance of SFH
 - “if it was easier to build more housing within the city (infill) that would relieve pressure off the marsh.”
 - Development and impervious surface right up to the edge of the marsh
 - Filled in marsh: UWL fields
 - “a lot of athletic fields border the marsh and in practice they act much like a parking lot.” Lots of fertilizer runoff; could have depressions built in to retain some water



- Development standards for previous surfaces and runoff are things that can be added to certain zoning districts.
 - Standards should be in place to anticipate low quality buildings eventually being redeveloped (Rose St-Copeland Ave)
 - However, we can't retrofit development standards.
- Most vulnerable place:
 - Menards
 - Single family homes near Zeisler St (a block off of La Crosse St)
 - Produce a lot of trash
 - Old, decrepit houses that are likely to be redeveloped in the long term; stormwater standards should be in place
 - Potential overlay for design standards, but don't limit it to just this area, have it apply to lots of other areas adjacent to the marsh ("marsh friendly protection zone")



- Lots of runoff going straight into the marsh; large washout during a high rainfall event.; these are more well-maintained homes, as compared to the area above.
- Pervious pavement – what's preventing broader implementation?

- High installation and maintenance costs; have performance issues (grit, debris build up). Have to vacuum out the stuff that gets filtered out
- Better in low traffic areas than high traffic.
- Vulnerable places:
 - Hwy 53
 - “Some properties need to be razed because they are within the floodway”
 - Oktoberfest grounds: redevelopment
 - Adjacent to a brownfield site (Excel)
- Magic Wand:
 - Some type of “Marsh Protection Zone/Overlay”
 - Uniform and consistent zoning for the entire marsh and its edges
 - Unified jurisdiction (“definitely need a magic wand here”)
 - **additional standards along the edges of the Marsh**

Date: July 16th, 2025

Time: 2:00 pm

Organization: Habitat for Humanity, CouleeCap, City Housing Staff

Interviewees: Kahya, Ashley, Jonah, Mara

Questions

1. What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?

- a. Kahya (Habitat): sent a letter with recommendations for the zoning code update in 2022 (comp plan process); some have been resolved but there are still some that need to be addressed.
 - i. Ex. a variance can lead to 5-6 meetings, often a night
 - ii. SFH standards are very big headache for us. The margins don't exist for us. It's heavy lift for every single home we build. Study says that WI is an especially onerous place to build
 - 1. Density is huge; getting into twinhomes, but would love to do even more
 - 2. Anything to make the process easier would help us.
- b. Ashley (Coulee): second everything Kahya said. Biggest issue is the number of meetings, and the fact that they are at night. Just to get one thing done and then your back the next month. Reducing meetings and process time directly would save us money. SFH design standards make it difficult to do our work. Doing some multi-family development through partners using tax credits.
 - i. Streamline and slim down meetings
- c. Kahya: We've tried to see if we could meet with Council or PC members to just talk with them about affordable housing (educate them). Feels like there is animosity with City Hall.
- d. Jonah (City): purchasing the parcels to redevelop. If there are major setback problems, I won't even touch it. Inconsistency with meetings is my big issue. Frustrating to not be able to predict if a variance will be approved or not (Board is inconsistent); gives you one shot to make this work.
 - i. Min. lot size is a big one for me. There are big lots that could be split so more, smaller homes can be built. But BOZA and the code make that difficult.
 - ii. Commissions pushes for owner-occupancy only. Creates issues for twinhomes.

2. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.

- a. Jonah: 1003 Island St (city-owned). 175 ft deep on a corner. Proposed that the parcel be split, facing Island St → dead in the water.
 - i. Would have worked in so many ways, except for the lot size requirements.

- b. Kahya: inspections and their consistency with interpretation of zoning. We've been told different things for different developments by the same department.
 - i. We left a line blank because the answer to that question was "NA" and it was accepted but did that again on another application and it was not accepted and had to have a sit down meeting to resolve the issue.
- c. BOZA is unpredictable. Long meetings.
 - i. They are also inconsistent. Denied a city-led project, but then a very similar project by a private citizen was approved.
 - ii. Haven on Main was referred to BOZA on more than one occasion.
 - iii. BOZA is appointed by the Mayor; allowed to be up to 7 but there are currently only 4. Only meet once a month.
 - 1. Why are they difficult to work with? Jonah: Big personalities and they have agendas. They have conflicts.
 - a. Tim: they have their own thoughts on how they should be reviewing and interpreting things that are different than the code.
 - b. They just deal with variances.
 - c. Kahya: there is confusion with what actually needs to be referred to BOZA; seems like there are times when something should have gone to Council, but it went to BOZA as a scapegoat/shield. Over time it seems like there been mission drift.
- d. City staff, Habitat, and Coulee feel like they are held to different standards by BOZA.
 - i. "We would love it if the zoning code was flexible enough that we didn't have to go to BOZA." Or there were exceptions for affordable housing.

3. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide/encourage/support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?

- a. Flexible standards for affordable housing:
 - i. Setbacks and lot sizes cause the most headache.
 - ii. Design standards. If we get money from the city of la crosse we had to follow the SFH design standards. The discount gets eaten up by having to follow these standards.
 - iii. Habitat gets the "stinky" complicated lots, but those are the ones that need to most amount of variances and exceptions because they are complicated (ex. nonconforming).
 - iv. Had to spend \$75 to get a signed letter from planning staff stating what the underlying zoning district for a parcel (separate one for every parcel). Additional costs and hoops for us because we are trying to do affordable housing.

- v. Habitat: it feels like we are held to different standards but than also expected to be the trial and error/creative ones. But then council gets mad at us sometimes for these things.
 - 1. Ex. modular homes

4. Magic Wand

- a. Mara: city projects should be able to do what they want. Shouldn't have to go through the same rigamarole as everyone else.
 - i. Have a zoning code that can actually combat NIMBYism
- b. A more administrative process would be helpful. But it also needs to be fairly applied. Decisions are made uniformly and apply to everyone.
- c. Jonah: make the floodplain go away on the northside.
 - i. Two separate sets of rules when you are working in the floodplain (FEMA and DNR)
 - ii. What if we let the building inspector be the first level of zoning review? (put the first part of the zoning approval process work to the folks that are working in the field).
- d. Ashley: a simplified process to get us to where we want to go. Take NIMBYs and other naysayers out of the process.
- e. It's confusing when there are city plans out there (for ex. the climate action plan) that state city goals, but then city processes get in the actual way to implementing those stated goals.
- f. Kahya: get rid of SFH standards. Apply the rules consistently.
- g. Mara: get the entire city on board that the unified goal should be building more housing. Inspections doesn't always see it that way.

Date: July 16th, 2025

Time: 9:00 am

Organization: ISG & Spies Construction

- Spies: small family-owned business. Mostly build SFH on unique lots. Been through BOZA a lot.

Interviewees: Will (sits on the building code appeals board), Chris (Civil PE), Adam (project architect); Delores Spies

Questions

1. What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?

- a. Spies: BOZA and zoning are time intensive and expensive.
 - i. Take on a lot of the weird parcels. Sometimes the city will buy the parcel, but Spies ends up developing because it would be too expensive for the city, coulee, or habitat to actually do it.
 - ii. They work on a lot of La Crosse Promise homes.
 - iii. Not currently building in La Crosse – nothing is available. She drives around town to find good opportunity.
- b. ISG (Will): you can tell the city's code is antiquated in comparison to other cities.
 - i. Goal should be to basically eliminate anything having to go through BOZA.
 - ii. I'm a big component of approving things by right.
 - iii. I'm anti-neighborhood associations. Begins as well intentioned, but turns into a force for NIMBY-ism.
 1. Comes up for anything larger than a quadplex.
 - iv. La Crosse has a reputation in our firm for being hard to develop it because of the citizenry and the process. Planning staff are great.
 - v. Lifelong resident of La Crosse. I want to see it grow,
 - vi. A lot of unintended conflict between what they say they want (affordable housing, climate crisis, etc) and what they actually have control over which is housing density.
 1. Their actions don't match their words. Lack of education.
 - vii. Council people don't understand that making firms go to tons of different meetings is very costly.
 - viii. A major driver of housing affordability is regulations. We have to figure out how to build more housing.
 - ix. No administrator, strong council, weak mayor.
 1. We need to take power away from the neighborhood associations.
- c. ISG (Chris): I like the design review process; preliminary meetings are good.
 - i. It would be nice for the sections to all be compiled in the same place.
 - ii. Use tables!

iii. Challenges with TND. 12-unit townhome with a community garden onsite, but those two separate uses and therefore required it to be rezoned as TND.

1. Need to make community gardens permitted by right in all resi districts.

d. ISG (Adam): overall design review process is helpful. Don't find it too restrictive. Certain districts and neighborhoods could have specific form based standards and would help take other interests off the table.

i. TND – had a project that exceeds the density limit. And didn't allow resi on the first floor.

e. Engineering and architects sometimes take more risk than developers because we don't get paid until later.

f. Delores: biggest complaint is the timeframe.

i. She typically gets the request she asks for; rear set backs.

2. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.

a. Current code requires you to do damn near complete civil/architectural plans—when you are going through TND, PUD, or having to go through a rezoning.

i. Form based code could also basically solve this problem.

ii. The design size of things is fine, it's the process.

3. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide/encourage/support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?

a. Density. Horizontal and vertical stacking.

b.

4. Would changes in the code allow a broader range of housing types (re: “missing middle”) to be developed?

Date: July 16th, 2025

Time: 3:00 pm

Organization: Makepeace Engineering, Roush Rentals

Interviewees: Jamey & Nick

- Roush; multi-family housing developer; manage everything we build)
 - “middle of the middle;” workforce housing. Don’t like to do anything less than 24 units, but its all site specific. Biggest building is 68 units.
- Makepeace: small civil engineering firm based on Onalaska. Helping folks gets through red tape
 - Issues when regulators and reviews don’t understand the ordinances. This is often state folks and even municipal folks.

Questions

1. What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?

- a. Are their communities you like working with more or less in the area?
 - i. Differences have more to do with staff and personalities than it does with different codes.
 - ii. Makepeace: my engineering fees are higher in La Crosse than Onalaska, but they are quickly catching up.
- b. Roush: multi-family housing reg/standards. They were developed myopically with student housing in mind at the time (no consideration of senior housing). Very prescriptive.
 - i. A lot of subjectively. Leaves the door open for NIMBY arguments.
 - ii. Needs layers for different uses.
 - iii. More by right allowances.
- c. Roush: stormwater regulations are stricter than the DNR. Have to spend more money working with Makepeace to make the reg work.
- d. Roush: the process. I know the process, so it’s not that difficult, but a lot of developers are whiners.
 - i. When the process is deep and expensive that can determine developers from wanting to work in your community or going to another one with less friction.
- e. Makepeace:
 - i. R-5 and R-6 setback requirements push people into PUD and TND
 - ii. Throw out the lot requirements for R-5 and R-6 entirely.
 - iii. Makepeace: Adjust the TND district; I love the PUD.
 1. What I don’t like about these districts is introducing politics into the process via public hearing.
 2. I want to be able to work directly with staff, and not have to through a bunch of committees.
 - iv. Roush: every project we’ve done has been TND or PUD. We’ve never been able to work within the ordinance.

- f. Roush and Makepeace both think it was a mistake to get rid of parking minimums.
 - i. Nick: the riverpoint district is going to be majorly under-parked and will be a perpetual problem.
 - ii. Makepeace: is a community with a better public transit system, it makes sense. But it doesn't make sense here. It creates a very expensive problem to solve later.
 - iii. Nick: I don't have a single tenant under the age of 70 that doesn't have a car.

2. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.

- a. Subdivision:
 - i. Requiring a plat for something that the state stats wouldn't require.
- b. Transparency is key to avoiding rework.
 - i. Fragmentation. Have all the information you need for a specific project in one place.
 - ii. Make it clearer with that people need to do right off the bat.
- c. Don't "through the baby out with the bath water"
- d. Multi-family design standard:
 - i. Weirdly specific and strange stormwater infiltration (parking lot section)
 - ii. Landscaping design is required too early; we don't have that person involved in the project as early as required by the process.

3. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide/encourage/support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?

- a.

4. Would changes in the code allow a broader range of housing types (re: "missing middle") to be developed?

- a. Nick: all of La Crosse's employers are 10% short on workforce, and yet our rental housing is at 1%. All the rentals are filled. Big city developers aren't coming to La Crosse. Lack of housing is the biggest roadblock to economic growth.

Date: July 16th, 2025

Time: 4:00 pm

Organization: Nicolai Development

- Been developing for 2 decades now. Did a lot of development on the north side where Menards used to be.
- Primarily do multi-family resi. Manage the properties they build.
- Manage about 700 units right now. “don’t use the word problems. Use solutions”

Interviewees: Steve and Nate

Questions

- 1. What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?**
 - a. Own several sites that they haven’t developed yet
 - i. Working towards it, including TIF requirements. Looking at a project downtown. Just finished a PUD project.
 - ii. Steve was on the architectural review committee in 2010.
- 2. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.**
 - a. Nate thinks the design review process was kind of weird. Trying to take notes from all the different city departments.
 - b. Steve: things have always been pretty good with city hall. Work well with Tim.
 - c. Steve was the president of the La Crosse Apartment Association (Landlord Association) and then your automatically include in the statewide association. “Sometimes it goes a little negative. Becomes a whining association.”
 - i. Had a branding issue for some time. Larger landlords felt like they didn’t need to be apart of it.
 - d. Was doing raingardens before it was popular.
 - e. Haven’t had issues with parking or the sign code.
- 3. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide/encourage/support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?**
 - a.
- 4. Would changes in the code allow a broader range of housing types (re: “missing middle”) to be developed?**
 - m.

Date: July 16th, 2025

Time: 9:00 am

Organization: Paragon Associates

- Consultant; civil engineering (stormwater)
- Firm often hired to help navigate city process

Interviewees: Jeff

Questions

1. What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?

- a. “don’t over change it.” We work in 20 different communities and each community has a certain “rhythm” that we are used to. Biggest challenge is having to start over.
 - i. Don’t put sections buried inside sections that don’t belong (West Salem); We refuse to work in West Salem because their code is so hard to follow.
- b. The code is working. “your [subdivision code] has always been easy to follow in my opinion.”
 - i. “the process is easy to follow.”

2. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.

- a. The way standards are referred to in the code isn’t clear.
 - i. Ex. Vision triangle clearance
 - ii. Put all of the site development standards in one place.
- b. For zoning, the TND process was “the most frustrating process of my life.”
 - i. Acts like a PUD.
 - ii. The zoning should operate like a preliminary and final plat. The final shouldn’t even go to council; have the plan commission have the final say at the preliminary level. Have a public hearing at the plan commission level.
 1. All TND processes should fit into either the residential or commercial design standards.
 2. The frustrating process he’s referencing took place beginning in Oct 2024 through spring of this year; the code changed in the middle of the process. Had to get a variance for the density.
 3. Had initial approval before the ordinance changed and then when it when for finalization the standards were different.
 4. Was working in an industrial parcel, so resi/commercial standards didn’t apply.
- c. TND zoning: feels like two separate applications. Shouldn’t feel like I’m starting from scratch.
 - i. Submitted a lot of information with the preliminary application and didn’t get any feedback from engineering.

1. Tim: I'm not sure how we can solve that problem through this process. Jeff: put it in the code (ex. must have comments back within 10 days).
2. Engineering said "we don't have to review it because it's not final."
- ii. There is an option to do the TND process as a "one step." However developers was assurances of approval before they invest a lot of time and money.
- iii. Tim: my overall goal with this project is that people won't have to used the TND process, and people won't have to use special zonings.
- iv. Jeff: we used TND because it was a mixed-use development (resi and office together on the same floor).
 1. The solution is a mixed use zone—which we don't currently have. Need to allow resi on the ground floor as a permitted use.
 2. Need to have neighborhood scale mixed use and higher density mixed around corridors. Relate the zoning districts to the scale and character to what we have in the city today.
- d. La Crosse is a *redevelopment* community. Different community than when I started.
 - i. The market drives what the developer will propose to you, and what the developer can offer is driven by the code.
 - ii. Don't let the code drives what happens; let the community needs and market demands drive the code.
 - iii. "Developers are inherently market driven."

3. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide/encourage/support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?

- a. Density—how we define density needs to be addressed.

4. Would changes in the code allow a broader range of housing types (re: "missing middle") to be developed?

- a. Mixed-use zoning.
- b. There is clarity and direction in the comprehensive plan that isn't getting translated into the zoning code.
 - i. Jeff: make sure that the comp is relevant. Tim: was intentionally left vague in our comp plan to allow flexibility (not tied to specific lots).
- c. "The typical zoning districts work."

5. "I don't have an issue with the subdivision ordinance. We know the quirks and it would be more difficult to re-learn a new code at this point."

- a. Just becomes a problem when things are reworked.
- b. Unless there is something specific that the city is trying to achieve, then don't change it.

6. Are there other communities you can reference that have easier codes to navigate?

- a. Not really. Some of them are more intense (ex. River Falls; it's extremely specific and at the same time it's very predictable/straightforward).
 - b. West Salem: they don't even follow their own code. It's bizarre.
 - c. Holmen and Onalaska: very easy to work with. They don't have design standards**
 - i. There's a lot of staff discretion in Holmen. The Village trusts us that we will put together a good landscaping plan.
 - ii. Potential issue is if the staff or administration in Holmen changes, and then the process changes.
 - iii. Would you rather have a River Falls or Holeman situation? Jeff: Holmen.
 - iv. Jeff has primarily been working with the school district and commercial in Holmen
 - d. Onalaska: give the public works director a lot of authority when it comes to stormwater management.
 - i. Small sites are easier to navigate there.
 - ii. La Crosse should give staff more discretion on stormwater management on small lots; currently hindered by the ordinance (which is a different chapter than zoning + sub.
 - 1. One set of stormwater standards for the WHOLE city. Poses challenges to downtown.
 - iii. "Putting a really big burden on a small piece of land." Over an acre and then the DNR
 - e. "The system you have here is good. I can't believe how quickly you turn things around."
 - i. "I like the design review process"
7. ** "We don't do site design. We design around stormwater." **
8. Can't do water infiltration. The solution to stormwater is infiltration, and the code doesn't allow us to do that.
9. "We do porous pavement regularly. The maintenance issue is that people don't do the maintenance."

Date: July 16th, 2025

Time: 11:00 am

Organization: River Architects

Interviewees: Val (moved here 50 years ago from Philly and lived in town), Matt (3 years w/ River, NC roots), Noah (intern, grew up in this area), & Mike (been here just as long as Val)

- “three of us are homeowners, so that’s another perspective”

Questions

1. What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?
 - a. Design vs. dimensional standards
 - i. Matt: my feeling is that the design standards aren’t really helping. They are pretty easy to meet in a half-hearted fashion. Leads people to meet them in a superficial way. It becomes one more hurdle.
 1. Both site design and building design.
 - b. Mike: Bentonville, AK → they sell a lifestyle there and people have bought into it. It’s not legislated, its survey.
 - i. La Crosse is moving in this direction (outdoor rec, trails)
 - c. Campus work: may or may not be totally beholden to the city’s code
 - i. Val: The campus has edges (the private property across the street). A recent test was the parking structure on the NW corner of campus near the fine arts center.
 1. The character of that neighborhood has changed a lot over the 50 years (asphalt and big boxy apartments).
 - ii. River did the master plan for the campus with SmithGroup/JJR
 - iii. Chancellors are less interested in acquiring.
 - d. Working with private customers near campus
 - i. Navigate the code isn’t the word, it’s more accept.
 - e. Mike - my three topics:
 - i. Residential density – buildable open area (ratio). Really restricted what we could build on the resi lots.
 - ii. Garage setback – different setbacks for attached or detached (who cares? Make it go away).
 - iii. Height limitations on smaller structures – crazy low numbers; really limits what can be down.
 - iv. Variance process – The boundaries between the townships and La Crosse are difficult to navigate and discern. It would be nice if there would be one code between the city and all the towns.
 - v. Think there should be more PUD for urban residential development.
 1. Pet peeve: pocket housing. Turn the house inwards but turns their backs on the rest of the neighborhood.
 - vi. Look up project in Nashville, TN: removing old housing and replacing with townhouses (putting two homes on the same lot).

1. Creative ways to change the setbacks and require the setbacks.
2. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.
 - a. Is there a way to build in accountability into the code?
 - i. Post occupancy evaluation would be an architectural parallel.
 - ii. Is there some way to evaluate if the thing got done the way we set out to?
3. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide/encourage/support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?
 - a. Appreciate what was done with the ADU ordinance. Owner-occupied requirement was a clever middle ground.
 - i. Having a similar requirement for duplexes could be an option. Could be a way to de-center developers in this conversation and lead more homeowner-drive redevelopment (bottom up).
 - b. Val: The sanctity of the SFH lot needs to be addressed. What is the balance point between attachment to that concept and the openness to integrate broader thinking. ADU is a good start, but the missing middle expands the conversations.
 - i. McHarley Lane: small resi development from early 2000's. No alleys, very traditional, porches close to the road, garages off to the side, smaller lots. It was a challenge even at the time.
 - ii. Interest in acquiring and consolidating lots to build a cottage cluster type development.
4. Would changes in the code allow a broader range of housing types (re: "missing middle") to be developed?

5. River's Areas of work:

- a. Yes: Commercial/residential, civic (healthcare), churches, historic preservation, and campus
 - i. Most resi work is SFH; multi-family is not a huge portion of portfolio.
 - ii. Do a lot of work directly with the city on their smaller projects; neighborhood parks. Touched almost every parks with the park and rec department. We are in touch with the neighborhoods.
- b. No: retail, industrial
- c. One of biggest clients is UWL, starting in 1990 into the present.
 - i. Also work in Madison, Platteville, and Eau Claire
 - ii. Gives perspective on differences between cities
- d. Work in a 3-hr radius of La Crosse (tri-state)
- e. Matt: why I live in La Crosse → bike trail connectivity and marsh trails connectivity.

- i. Awkward experience where zoning became a factor: La Crosse St and Mosey Blvd development (Heeders/Heaters?). Resistant neighbors that don't want any change were weaponizing the zoning code (parking standards specifically) in their favor. The code wasn't encouraging things to make things better. "Not pushing the design beyond some bare minimum state."
 - 1. Parking min for multi-family requires a variance. May no longer be the case since change.

Date: July 17th, 2025

Time: 8:30 am

Organization: REACH Center - Underrepresented Populations

- Service provider hub for those experiencing housing instability
- YMCA, behavioral health services, salvation army, and many more
- First of its kind hub is WI; other communities working to duplicate
 - Offering up additional, affordable

Interviewees: Kim (program development director for CouleeCap); Jason (entirely free clinic, pharmacy);

Questions

1. Rodney; Community member

- a. Came to La Crosse from Atlanta many years ago; “should have had a place like this a lot earlier.” Currently experiencing homelessness. Had a place last year but it was infested with roaches. 20 years in the military. Working with someone at the REACH Center now to find an apartment. The homelessness problem in the La Crosse has been going on for a long time.
 - i. Trying to get into county housing.
 - ii. Doesn’t want to live with a lot of other people. Wants to live alone, which makes it even more difficult to find a place.
 - iii. “Being homeless is very dangerous. It’s not fun. Wouldn’t put it on no-one.”
 - iv. A new apartment opened up with 13 units set aside for people who are homeless, but the application itself it’s a huge barrier in and of itself.
 1. **need even lower barriers for these folks**
 2. Have to have a case manager, do a sit down interview. a
 3. Not even half of the units are currently filled.
 - v. **huge issue: landlords providing far less than livable housing. And they get away with it in part because of the housing shortage.

2. REACH Center

- a. Had to deal with sooooo much to get all the zoning approved for the renovation
- b. Have to deal with a lot of NIMBY-ism with the neighborhood. Get way too much attention and scrutiny for any “mistakes.”

3. Couleecap

- a. Community Action Agency (programs rolled out in the 1960’s with LBJ’s “war on poverty”); really big in the La Crosse county. Mission is essentially to fight poverty, through a variety of services and programs. Oriented towards those who are low income.
 - i. Homelessness to home-buyer. Food pantry, food security programs, employment development.
 - ii. Operate in 4 counties

4. St. Clare Health Mission

- a. Free health clinic for the uninsured (once or twice a week). Specialist clinic once a month. Do street medicine, farm medicine.
 - b. Community health workers in both Gunderson and Mayo.
 - c. Serve folks who are experiencing homelessness.
 - d. No governing body for free clinics in WI.
 - e. 95% of who we serve are employed; but this likely to change over the next 6 months with the new federal Medicaid cuts.
- 5. Top Issues:
 - a. Lack of *actual* affordable housing.
 - b. Lack of treatment and sober living for women.
 - c. Housing people with high barriers, low income, or no income.
 - d. Lack of shelter space. If we had affordable housing, we could get people in and out of shelters more quickly.
 - e. Funding. We lack staff to even serve all the people.
 - f. Both an infrastructure problem and a process/red tape/application process.
 - i. And the root of both is funding.
 - g. HUD: Coulee gets grants every year for permanent supportive housing. They have a scoring system that gets people in need more directly.
 - i. Local housing authorities—even though they are getting money from HUD—they have different rules and screening that kick people out.
- 6. Local Landlord Associations
 - a. Very organized group; the demand is greater than the supply so they have all the power. They say we are business not a charitable organization.
 - b. Larger landlords may not be involved in the group because they don't need to be.
 - c. The folks at the REACH center have tried many times to work with the landlords to try and find solutions, and they are very difficult to work with.
 - d. "There are a lot of landlords in this city."
- 7. 2219 Lofts – success story for set asides
 - a. Couleecap is the liaison between units and homeless community.
 - b. Really great manager to work with who understood the mission.
 - c. Couleecap was able to push back on the screening requirements to make them looser. Were able to switch
- 8. Another barrier for folks is being on the sex offender registry.
- 9. Homeless pop
 - a. ~270 people in the pathways program (city-county collaboration)
 - b. Unaccounted for: living in motels, doubling up with friends and family, camping.
 - c. Kim says 20 years ago the homeless population was not nearly as visible as it is today.
 - i. Not keeping up with the trends.
- 10. Zoning Issues
 - a. Unrelated rule (rooming house aspect); no clear.
 - b. LIHTC → requires a community room

- i. These rooms are difficult to include in current zoning, so projects have to use TND.
 - c. The reach center ran into issues with the 50% rule for renovations.
 - d. Can the REACH Center and the Salvation Army's building have a special zoning designation that makes it easier to do renovations? Currently very difficult.
 - e. The organizations are already doing enough—let's not add red tape on top of them.
 - f. Don't have a good way to zone for shelters. They try to go "commercial" but they have to shuffle people out every 28 days (like a hotel).
 - g. Youth shelter (rymes) just now has the ability for people to stay over night
 - i. Issue with the definition of "bed"
 - ii. Similar for "warming shelter"
 - h. Ideally would like a non-religious shelter. More welcoming to LGBTQ.
11. Magic Wand:
- a. Nancy: accessible/attainable units, that are low barrier.
 - b. Kim: don't create zoning that marginalizes already marginalized folks, even unintentionally.
 - c. Nuche: second Nancy.
 - d. Rodney: Everyone that's entitled to housing can get it. Everyone needs it. Give people a second chance. "everything free ain't good for you."
 - e. Megan: the whole community would have trauma-informed care, more empathy and understanding.

Date: July 17th, 2025

Time: 11:00 am

Organization: Vantage Architects, Weiser Brothers

- Weiser: general commercial construction
- Vantage: commercial architecture

Interviewees: Jeff & Cathy (Vantage), Brian (Weiser)

Questions

1. What are the top three issues with the code from your experience (can be urban/performance/landscape standards, districts, administration, approval process or other)?

a.

2. Please share 1 major challenge you have with this code.

a. Eliminating parking requirements

i. Ex. Millennial Project. Had to fit a rehab project to the existing surface parking lot, which created limitations. (fit the design to the parking).

1. The new code would have given more flexibility.

2. Stormwater: b/c it was a new site they didn't have to meet all the stormwater requirements. But when they built a new building on the site a year later all the requirements changed. Had to go through full commercial design review. Had to rebuild a completed stormwater system to meet the city higher standards than the DNR.

ii. Redevelopment of sites get really tricky with meeting the stormwater regs.

iii. We have to be really proactive with talking with our clients to prep them for future projects and phases.

b. The design standards require that the city's stormwater regs be met, but they are in another chapter. So can't be changed directly through the process, but maybe the design standards can be.

c. Design review process:

i. Issue: once the process has been completed but a change comes up afterwards, do they have to re-do the process from scratch? Unclear who are are supposed to talk to.

1. Would have to get a variance to do the signage on a public/semi public zoned property.

ii. Signage comes up in almost every project we do.

iii. Conflict between clients that have national standards butting up against local sign code standards.

d. Haven on Main Project → conflict with new TND density requirement.

e. Pump house project → **Fire Districts**. It's difficult to figure out if you are in the fire districts or not. Not currently mapped!! Insanely arcane language to try and determine the geographic area.

- i. This was revealed after a lot of work and variances had already been worked though and were finally ready to get a permit.
- ii. River point district is also located within the fire limits districts.
- iii. Process: historic building, so they had to go through the historic preservation commission (not commercial design standards).
Disconnection between state and local preservation standards.
 - 1. Lessor standards for really small additions? Build in the ability for their to be staff discretion for small projects.

- 3. What is the best way the code and urban regulations can provide/encourage/support a larger and broader range of housing choices in the city?**
 - a.
- 4. Would changes in the code allow a broader range of housing types (re: “missing middle”) to be developed?**