

Zoning & Subdivision UpdateCity Plan Commission

Study Guide | *June 30, 2025*



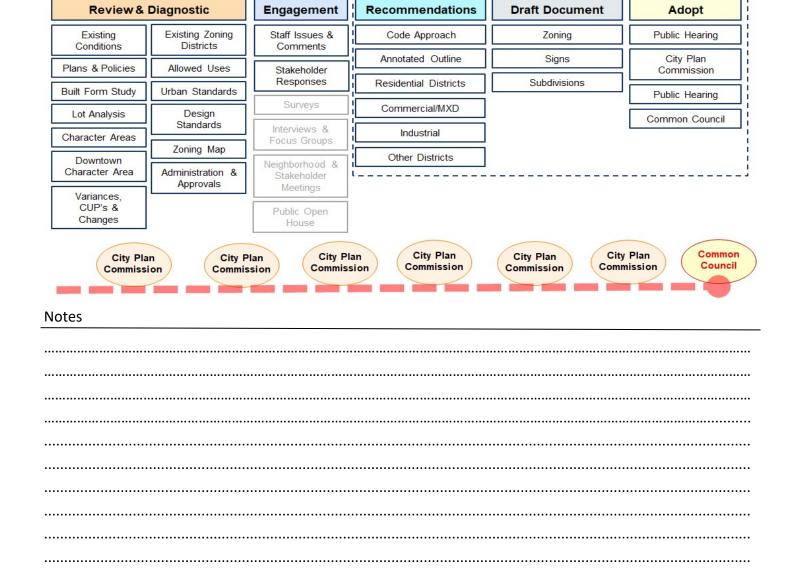


Introduction

Use this study guide to help organize the information, analysis and steps to better understand the content of the zoning code and subdivision regulations including existing conditions, code diagnostics, applicable plans and policies, built form and character analysis. Below is the general process for how the code and subdivision regulations will be updated based on direction and input from community stakeholders, staff comments and guidance from the City Plan Commission.

Topics to Review

- 1) Memo 1 Conditions & Plans
- 2) Memo 2 District Summaries & Subdivisions
- 3) Built Form Study
- 4) Character Areas
- 5) Downtown Character Areas
- 6) Lot Size Study
- 7) Memo 3—Administration
- 8) Approval Flowchart Diagrams





Memo 1: Existing Conditions

- a) 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- b) 2024 Housing Study Summary
- c) Analysis to Impediments to Fair Housing Choice
- d) Imagine 2040 Downtown Plan
- e) History of Variances
- f) History of Conditional Use Permits
- g) Other adopted plans & policies



- What are the key policies from the Comp Plan driving the zoning and subdivision updates?
- Review the Housing Study recommendations relative to zoning code content.



Population information from the Comp Plan:

- Population is projected to moderately increase from 50,869 (2021) to 53,480 (2050)
- As of Jan 1, 2024 the population was 52,115 (WI Department of Admin. Estimate)

Residential land use makes up about 19% of the total land area in the City. Residential definitions from the Comp Plan (p. 32):

- Low-Density Residential—mostly one-two story single-family structures but may also include two- and three-unit dwellings; other housing types such as townhomes and rowhomes may be compatible, especially if developed to fit a single-family mold
- Medium Density Residential may include a variety of housing types including townhomes, rowhomes, small multi-family buildings, and large multi family buildings of two-four stories
- High-Density Residential includes multi-family units in structures taller than three stories; interconnected within surrounding neighborhoods and as well as near major streets connections and employment/ commercial areas.

notes





Land Use and Zoning matrix from the Comp Plan (p. 69)

Zoning Guide for future land use: how to use this matrix

As the neighborhoods, districts, and corridors chapter guides property owners and policymakers in land use decisions, it also appropriately locates development within La Crosse's zoning code. Any zoning amendments should refer to this matrix to ensure the proposed zoning is consistent with the Future Land Use (NDC) Map.

Low-Density Residential Medium-Density Residential High-Density Residential

Use

Use

Industrial

Institutional

Parks & Open Space

Wetlands, Agriculture

Low-Intensity Mixed-

High-Intensity Mixed-

Neighborhood Retail/ Commercial

								Zon	ing								
Single-Family Residential	Residence District	Special Residence	Low-Density Multiple Dwelling District	Multiple Dwelling District	Special Multiple Dwelling District	Washburn Neighborhood Residential District	Local Business District	Community Business District	Commercial District	Light Manufacturing District	Heavy Industrial District	Public Utility District	Parking Lot District	Public and Semi-Public District	Conservancy District	Agricultural District	Exclusive Agricultural District
R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5	R-6	Wa	Lo	Co	ΰ	M-1	ž	Pu	Pai	Pu	S	Ag	Dis
с	С	С	С	i	i	С	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	С	i	i
i	С	С	c	С	i	С	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	c	ì	i
i	i	i	i	С	С	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	С	i	i
i	i	i	c	С	i	с	c	с	i	i	i	i	i	С	i	i	i
i	i	i	i	С	С	i	С	С	c	i	i	i	i	С	i	i	i
i	i	-	i	i	i	i	c	c	c	-	i	i	-	÷	-	i	i
i	i	i	i	i	i	i	С	с	С	С	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	С	С	i	i	i	i	i	i
i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	c	i	С	i	i	i

C= Consistent i=Inconsistent

Notes	



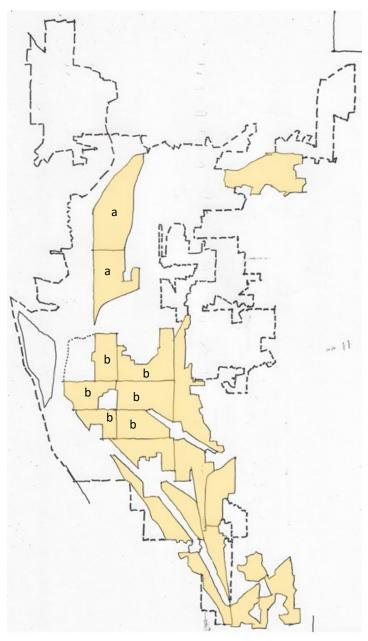
Memo 2: Diagnostic Summary

- a) Introduction
- b) Residential Districts
- c) Residential Map Diagrams
- d) Commercial Districts
- e) Industrial Districts
- f) Overlay & Other Districts
- g) Summary Dimensional Standards Table
- h) Historic Zoning Map
- i) Chapter 113 Subdivisions



Notes

Residential neighborhood boundaries are shown in yellow at right. The Logan Northside and Lower Northside neighborhoods (a) contain a more consistent low density, detached residential pattern. Neighborhoods in the central part of the city (e.g., Downtown, Grandview-Emerson, Washburn, Weigent-Hogan, Powell-Poage-Hamilton and Holy Trinity-Longfellow) include a similar street and block pattern but contain more corridors and districts that tend to support greater density and diversity with housing, related uses and development changes.





Built Form Study*

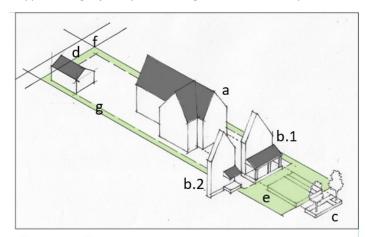
- a) 18 Neighborhoods
- b) 12 Districts
- c) 5 Corridors

*based on the NDC Framework as defined in the Comp Plan



- Compare the built form study characteristics of the various neighborhoods to confirm physical form patterns for neighborhood scale residential and commercial uses.
- Should changes to urban and dimensional standards recognize and respond to the local context and character?

Typical single family lot arrangement and built pattern



Common features

A. 1.5 to 2 story

B.1 Stoop entry

B.2 Porch entry

C. Sidewalk, planted blvds & on-street parking

D. Off street parking: alley loaded

E. Front yards: 15-25 ft F. Rear yards: 6-8 ft

G. Side yard: one tends to be shifted more to

one side

Notes

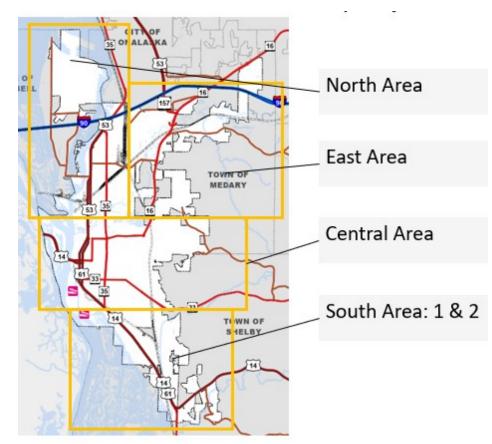


Character Areas

- a) North Area
- b) East Area
- c) Central Area
- d) South Area 1 & 2



- Areas adjacent to a number of districts include "district orbits", areas that tend to attract interest, investment and influence that may be less compatible with established neighborhood character.
- Do these areas need additional standards and regulations relative to scale, density and physical form (e.g., the residential areas west, south and east of the UW campus)?



otes



Downtown Character Areas

- a) Downtown Area
- b) Core
- c) Main Street











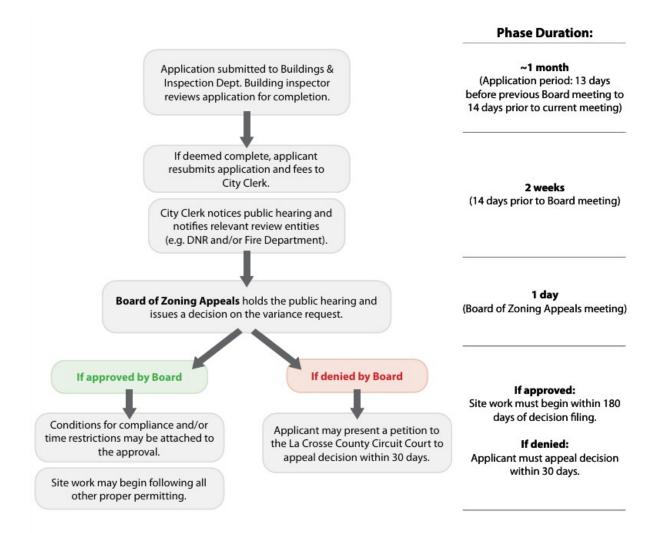


- Note distinctions between the "main street" area and the larger downtown boundary.
- Some new development have included parking on the ground floor (within the building envelope) fronting the pedestrian public realm. Should this condition be differentiated in the "main street" area vs. other areas of downtown.

Notes



Approval Process Diagrams: Variance (Board of Zoning Appeals)



Notes





Approval Process Diagrams: Conditional Use Permit

Applicant holds pre-application meeting with the Planning & Development Dept. to discuss the proposed use, why a CUP is needed, and relevant Municipal Code sections.

Application submitted to Planning & Development Dept. and review application for completion.

If deemed complete and eligible, applicant files application and with City Clerk and submits fee to City Treasurer.

City Clerk notices public hearing and notifies relevant review entities (e.g. DNR and/or Fire Department).

Plan Commission holds public hearing and forwards conditional use permit request findings and recommendations to Judiciary and Administration Committee.

Judiciary and Administration

Committee holds public hearing and forwards conditional use permit request findings and recommendations to

Common Council.

Common Council holds public hearing and issues a final decision on the conditional use permit request.

If denied by Council

Applicant may present a petition to

the La Crosse County Circuit Court to

appeal decision within 30 days.

If approved by Council

Conditions for compliance and/or time restrictions may be attached to the approval.

Site work may begin following all other proper permitting.

Phase Duration:

~4-6 weeks

(Application period: Friday before the second Thursday of the month; application considered at next month's Common Council meeting due to notice and publication requirements)

1 week

(7 days prior to Commission meeting)

1 day

(Plan Commission meeting)

1 day

(Judiciary and Administration Committee meeting)

1 day

(Common Council meeting)

If approved:

Site work must begin within 365 days and operational within 730 days of decision filing. CUP permit remains valid unless the conditional use is discontinued or ceases to exist for 365+ days.

If denied:

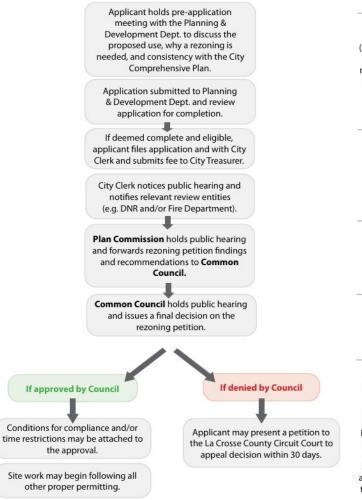
Applicant must appeal decision within 30 days.

Notes

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SUBJECT TO EDITS CHANGES



Approval Process Diagrams: Zoning Amendment (Rezoning)



Phase Duration:

~4-6 weeks

(Application period: Friday before the second Thursday of the month; application considered at next month's Common Council meeting due to notice and publication requirements)

2 weeks

(14 days prior to Commission meeting)

1 day

(Plan Commission meeting)

1 day

(Common Council meeting)

If approved:

Site work cannot begin until the rezoning is finalized and filed. and a building permit has been issued by the Fire Department. Permits will not be issued during the rezoning process unless the applicant requests and receives authorization from the Judiciary and Administration Committee of the Common Council following a public hearing.

If denied:

Applicant must appeal decision within 30 days.

Note:

- Petition for zoning amendment may be initiated by one or more property owners of the property within the area proposed to be
- Petitions to change any flood district boundary or floodplain regulation may require technical data, including aerial maps, flood elevations, and development details, as determined by the Fire Department - Division of Fire Prevention and Building Safety and
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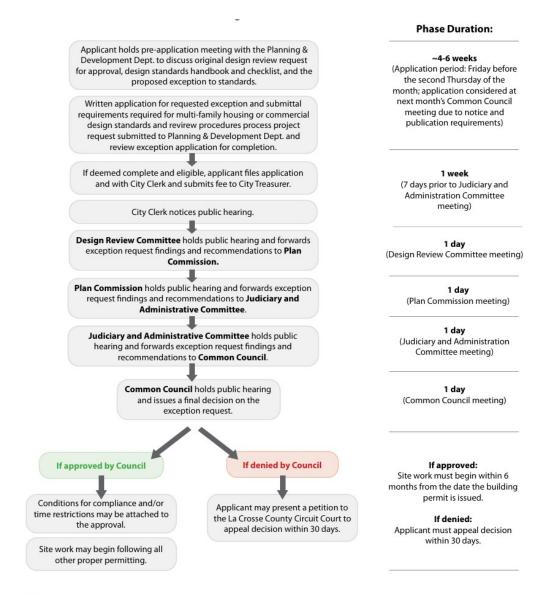
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 SUBJECT TO EDITS CHANGES Floodplain zoning amendments require approval from the DNR and FEMA before becoming effective, except for map changes tied to the La Crosse River Valley Floodplain Study.

Notes



Approval Process Diagrams: Request for Exemption to Design Standards



Note:

- 1. Ch. 11 Art. VII Div. 3. Multi-Family Housing Design Standards.
- 2. Ch. 11 Art. VII Div. 4. Commercial Design Standards. The applicant is encouraged to meet with City staff at the schematic stage, the design stage, and at the submittal stage. Members of the Design Review Committee will be encouraged to attend the pre-application meeting to facilitate the development review process. Developers are strongly encouraged to obtain Design Review Committee approval prior to submitting plans to the State for State review and approval.

Notes

