

IMAGINE

2040 LA CROSSE DOWNTOWN PLAN

City Vision 2020

About Downtown
Plan Accomplishments
Lessons

Imagine 2040

Process and Pivots
Plan Elements
Lessons



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2040 LA CROSSE DOWNTOWN PLAN



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Imagine 2040 Project Manager



“La Crosse.

Here is a town of twelve or thirteen thousand population, with electric lighted streets, and blocks of buildings which are stately enough and also architecturally fine enough to command respect in any city. It is a choice town.”

Mark Twain - Life on the Mississippi - 1896



The River



Tourism



Tourism





Downtown Decline- Factors

THE DARK YEARS 1960-1989

Valley View Mall Constructed 1978

All Major Retailers in Downtown
Leave to I-90



Downtown Decline - Factors

THE DARK YEARS 1960-1989

- **Downtown Urban Renewal**
 - **Demolition of Post Office, County Courthouse, Stoddard Hotel, Library, Warehouse District**
 - **Exterior alterations**
- **No Investment**
- **No Overall Strategy**



Historic Post Office



Current Post Office



Historic Stoddard Hotel



Current Site of Stoddard Hotel



Historic Public Library



PUBLIC LIBRARY, LA CROSSE, WIS.



Current Public Library



Historic County Courthouse



Current County Courthouse



Urban Renewal- Metal Facade



Urban Renewal- Window Infill- Use of Stucco



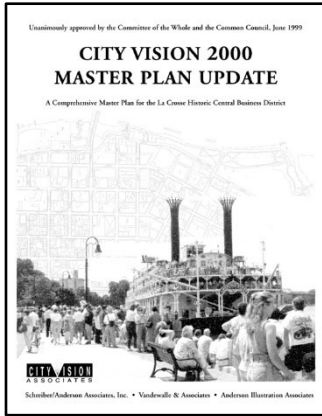
Abandoned Industrial Building



Pearl Street



La Crosse- Downtown Revitalization

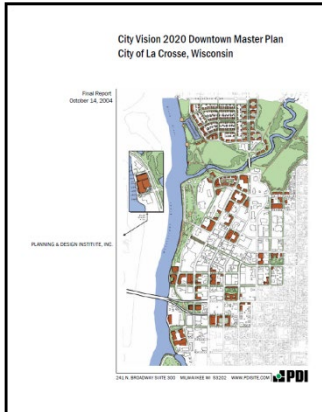


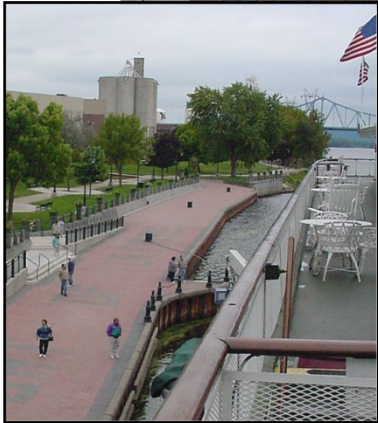
Downtown Mainstreet Inc. emerges 1989-1991

- Primary focus is on the economic prosperity of the Historic Downtown.

City Vision 2000 Master Plan Adopted in 1992 and revised in 1996, 1999, & 2004

- Established short and long term strategies for reinvestment, revitalization, redevelopment
RECOVERY!!
- Identified the need for Public Investment.





Public Investment

TIF # 6 Created in 1994

- Additional TIF Districts created since

First Capital Projects in 1995 (Over \$70 Million last 25+ years)

- Pearl Street Streetscaping
 - Continue to streetscape several streets per year (Over 100 block faces now complete)
- Riverwalk
- La Crosse Center

Multiple Grant Awards

Stimulated Some Private Investment



La Crosse- Downtown Revitalization



La Crosse- Downtown Revitalization

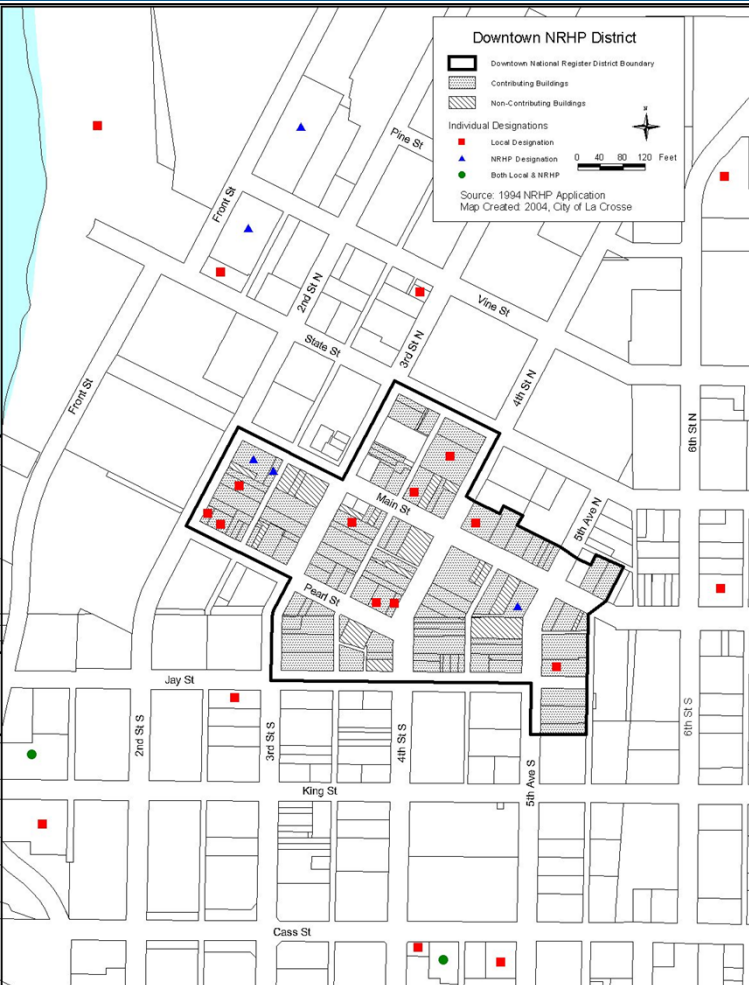


La Crosse- Downtown Revitalization



NRHP Tax Credit Projects

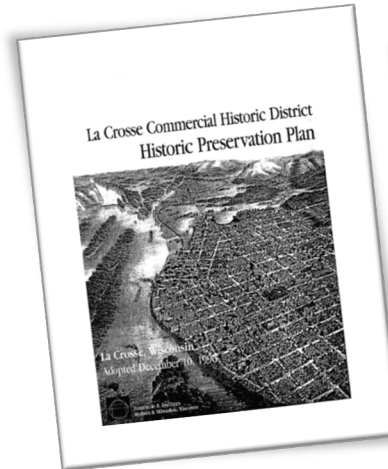




Public Investment

Historic Survey 1984, 1996

- Identified Downtown District for NRHP
 - 115 properties, 98 Contributing
- Nominated in 1994
 - TAX CREDITS!!
- Preservation Plans 1996, 2004



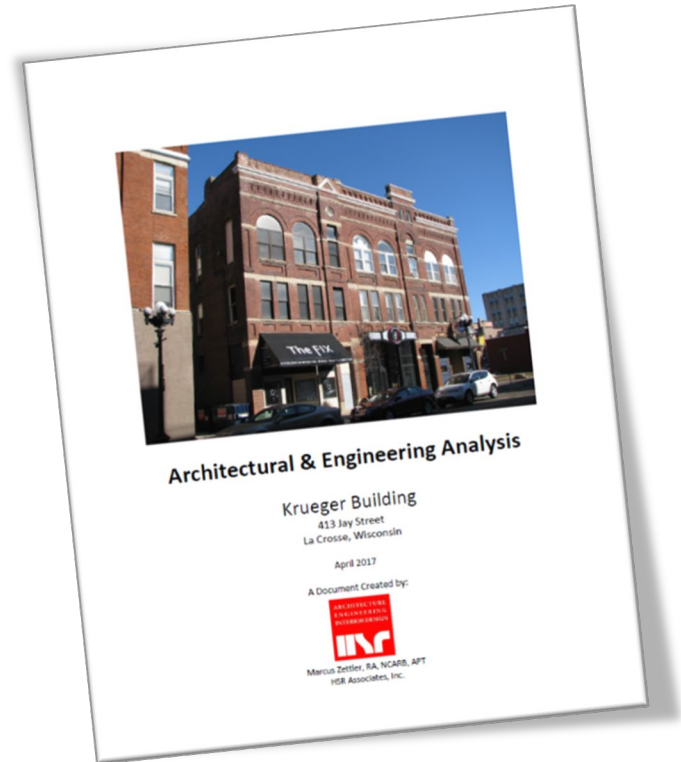
Public Investment

Need for Financial Incentives.

- Job Creation
- Preservation of Infrastructure (remaining)
- Existing Businesses
- Attract New Development

Development of Economic Programs (TOOLBOX)

- A&E Program
- Small Business Development Loan Program
- Upper Floor Renovation Loan Program
- Large Scale Business Assistance (TIF)
- Elevate Façade Improvement Grant Program



Development



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2040 LA CROSSE DOWNTOWN PLAN

A New Plan for 2040

Launched in 2020

A New Plan for 2040

Focus was Redevelopment/Restoration/Reuse.

- Largely implemented

Focus Shift: **QUALITY OF LIFE**

- Livability
- Entertainment
- Adjacent Neighborhoods
- Live Work Play

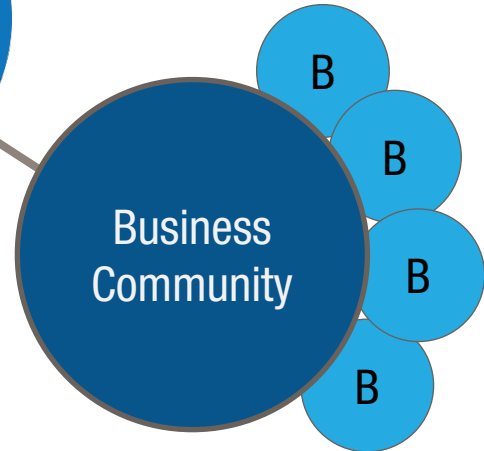




City of La Crosse



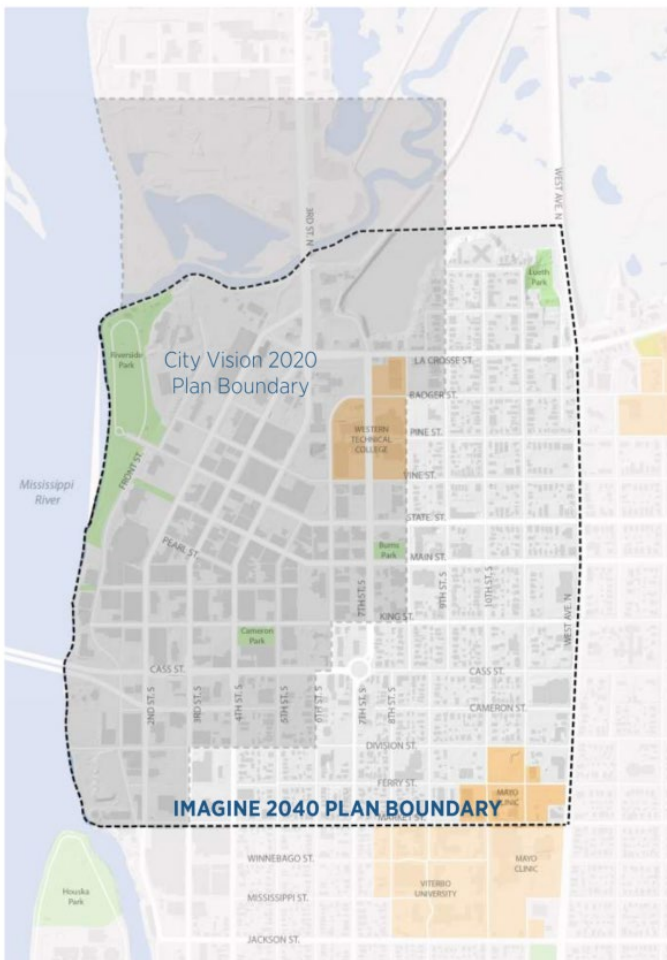
Downtown Mainstreet, Inc.



LA CROSSE COUNTY
Exceptional services. Extraordinary place.



Need for a New Plan



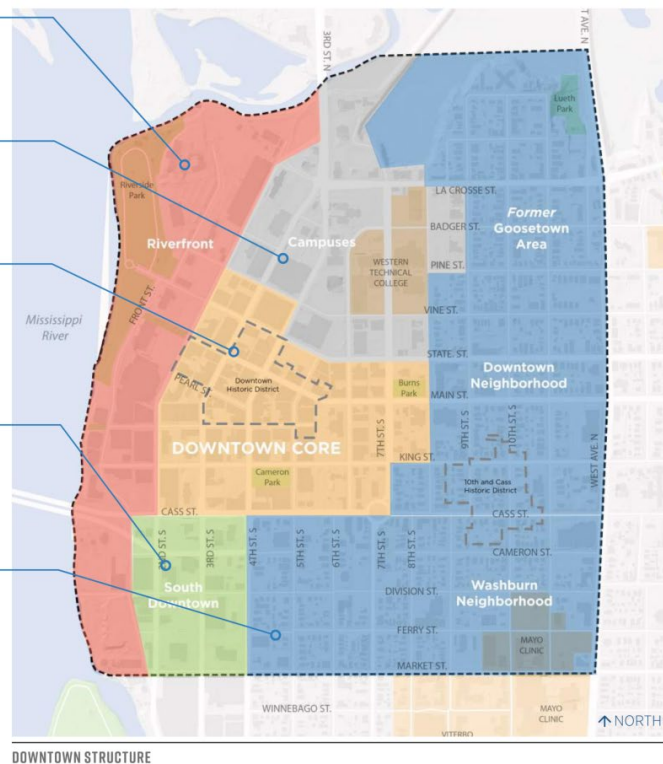
Riverfront
This area is primarily occupied by Riverside Park, but also includes the commercial and entertainment buildings north of Cass Street and the industrial area to the south.

Campuses
A Government and Education district northeast of the Core includes a number of city, county, and federal buildings in addition to the Western Technical College campus.

The Core
The Core encompasses the boundary of the Downtown Historic District as well as the blocks to the south and east. This area is traditionally referred to as downtown with primarily 19th century buildings and some newer construction on the fringe.

South Downtown
A small district of automobile and warehousing uses developed in the southwest end of the study area. This includes several automobile sales lots and associated warehousing structures.

Neighborhoods
Three residential areas comprise the larger neighborhood district. To the north, formerly known as Goosetown, is primarily residential with many late 20th century apartment buildings. The center of the district houses the 10th and Cass Historic Residential District. The southern end is Washburn, an area with numerous medical and educational campuses with a mix of old and new residential units.



Planning Process



MAY

Project Launch

The first steering committee meeting was held and the engagement platform was created which included a legacy video describing the project themes and directions, a social media strategy, and the project website.



JUNE

Listening Sessions

Over 35 virtual listening sessions were held. Participants represented a variety of voices with diverse experience and perspectives.



JULY

Feedback

An interactive map was launched allowing users to pin location specific ideas or comments. The online survey was launched and promoted at a planned events. The first of 6 walking tours were conducted with the steering committee.



AUGUST

Design Studio

The most prominent in-person event was the three day design studio, which provided opportunities to learn and comment at three stations on Main Street. Additionally, two walking tours were conducted.



SEPTEMBER

Listening Sessions

Additional listening sessions were held virtually with the addition of meetings at Burns Park with the neighborhood association and on Pearl Street with business owners.



OCTOBER

Pulse Check

Concepts were advanced and themes refined, which helped frame the plan's structure. Additional interviews and listening sessions were held with stakeholders.



NOV - DEC

Subcommittee Workshops

The steering committee split into three sub-committees to discuss policy, projects, and process.



JANUARY '21

Concept Refinement

Through the sub-committee meetings, the plan concepts were further refined. The team met with several community groups to get receive additional feedback on ideas.



FEB - MARCH

Plan Drafting

Narrative and graphics were prepared for the publication.



FEB - MAY

Open House

A public open house gallery was setup at the public library for several months and in a virtual gallery space. The project team presented at numerous meetings to orient people to the plan's concepts.



MAY - JULY

Plan Refinement

The document was edited and reviewed by the steering committee throughout the Spring and incorporated feedback from the public open houses.



AUGUST

Approval

The final document was posted online for public review before formal approval.



Imagine 2040



A Network of Vibrant Neighborhoods

FORMER GOOSE TOWN AREA

Formerly known as the Gossetown Neighborhood, this area is characterized by older homes, slip-in apartments, and small historic commercial structures. Many of the 1930s area apartments are in poor condition and nearing the end of their productive use. Several other older homes have fallen into disrepair and may not be salvageable. As market forces open development opportunities on these sites, a variety of infill opportunities emerge. The diagram to the right illustrates several demonstration projects to provide new housing options on unique existing lots such as narrow, but deep lots.

FEATURES:

- A. Urban Multi-Family.** These buildings frame the street corridor and have several visible entrances along the main corridor to reinforce a pedestrian focused environment. Projects could be adapted for mixed use.
- B. Rowhome Infill.** The medium-high architectural program can apply to this lot block. The street frontage provides a possible grid.
- C. Deep Lot Housing.** The lot block is currently a lot that serves two-story lots. The use attempts to complement the single-story units nearby, yet adds a slightly higher lot of units.
- D. Pine Street Pathway Corridor.** The Pine Street Pathway is an east-west pedestrian crosswalk that starts at the Mississippi River and connects to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The corridor could support a significant amount of independent to replace housing that's in diminishing condition.
- E. Neighborhood Nodes.** Adding well-marked pedestrian crosswalks will improve the safety for people crossing these streets.
- F. North-South Greenway.** The greenway is a priority street to restore the tree canopy and designate as a bicycle route that connects the neighborhoods.

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A Network of Vibrant Neighborhoods

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Projects should frame the street by building to the property line and making parking available from behind. The plan presents new housing options with independent entries. The project may have greater intensity than shown, like the Live Work Use Project.



Planning Process | Steering Committee

16 members

Monthly meetings
(only 2 were in-person)



TIPS

Group was an **official board** that had chairs, set meetings times that were streamed live and recorded

- High attendance (+)
- 1:1 Interviews
- Shift to subcommittees for candid discussion



2 miles = 1.5 hours

Process | Focus Groups



Planned:
10

Actual:
Lost count



Process | Focus Groups



TIPS

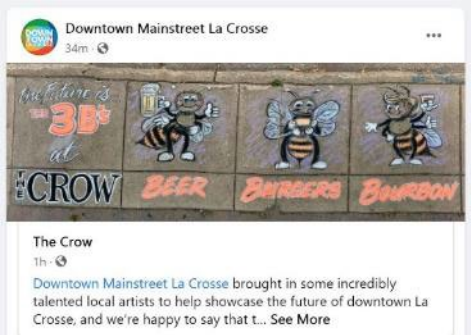
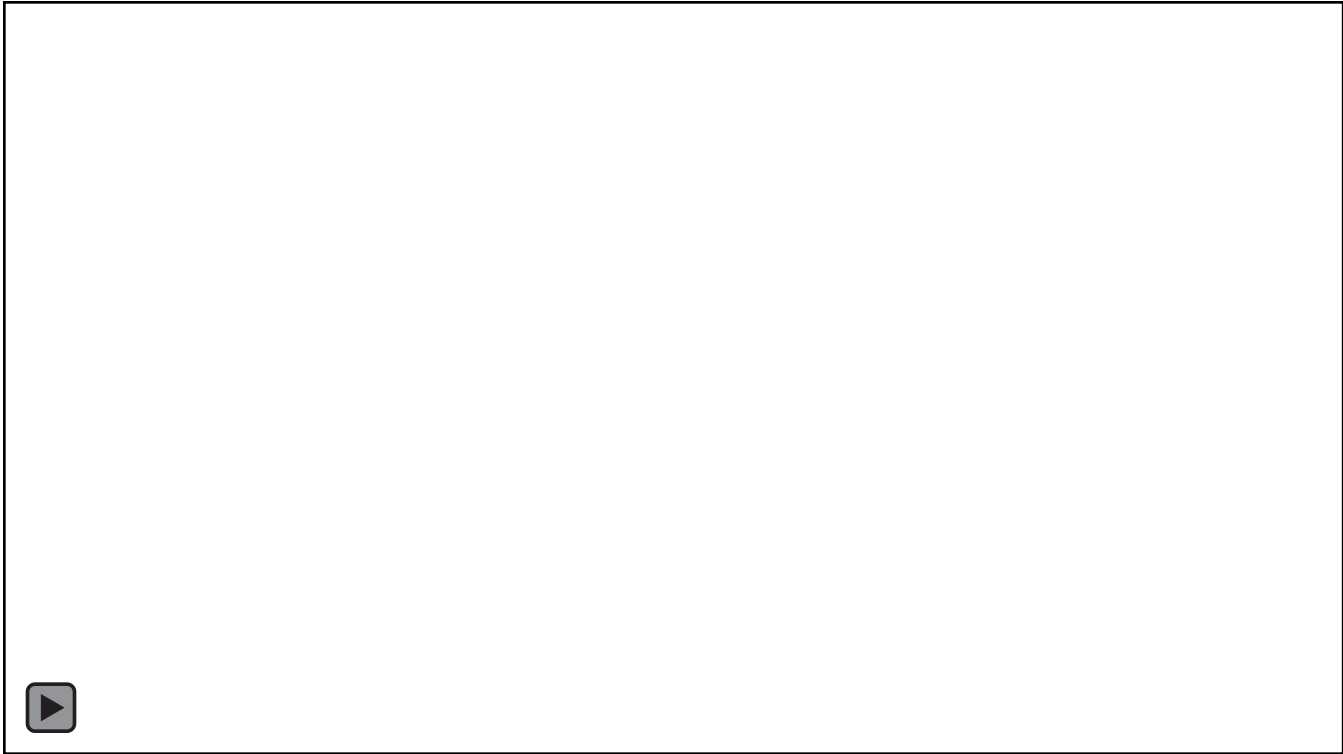
Shift to smaller groups of <6

Turn on cameras

Notifications from local group.



Process | Websites, Social Media, E-blasts, and Video (Animoto)



Process | Websites, Social Media, and E-blasts



Support Our Local Businesses

During this time of adjustments in daily routines, we encourage you to remember our many small businesses in downtown and to continue supporting them. Many of our businesses are now open and invite you to continue your shopping, dining and service experiences under safe guidelines set forth by the La Crosse County Health Department and the WEDC- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation.

Follow this same guidance regarding social distancing and proper health etiquette if and when visiting businesses and public spaces. The first priority for everyone is to take appropriate steps to limit the spread of COVID-19 and ensure our entire community remains healthy.

Ways to Support Your Local Businesses Now:

1. Shop in person or via phone, online or email. Some of downtown's retailers have online shopping available; our local and independent shops will help you get what you need via phone, email, in-person, or other methods, if necessary. Curbside pick-up is available at many businesses. See [HERE](#).
2. Purchase custom or corporate gifts from local retailers who can handle orders over the phone or online.
3. If you typically order wholesale products with local retailers later in the year, place your orders now.
4. If you do not need anything specific at the moment but still want to support

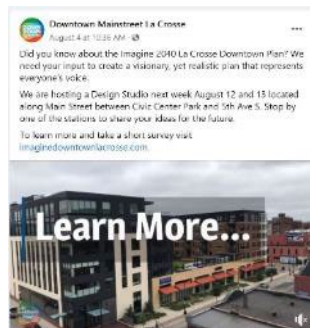
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2040 LA CROSSE DOWNTOWN PLAN



Text Message
Today 10:01 AM

What's your big idea for downtown? Stop by one of our stations at Civic Center Park, Grounded Coffee, or the DMI offices on Main Street today or tomorrow before 6 pm to let us know!





TIPS

- Have a branded website
- Use video to attract people
- Pay Facebook for advertising
- Push notifications to phones
- Don't overdo online tools



Process | Outdoor Activities



Grounded Coffee



Intercepting People



Media



Civic Center Park



Farmers Market



NA Mtgs



Process | Experiencing the district through lenses



Richard Chrz

Renee



Process | Design Studio



Process | Design Studio Awareness



Process | Design Studio



Emerging Concepts



BEFORE

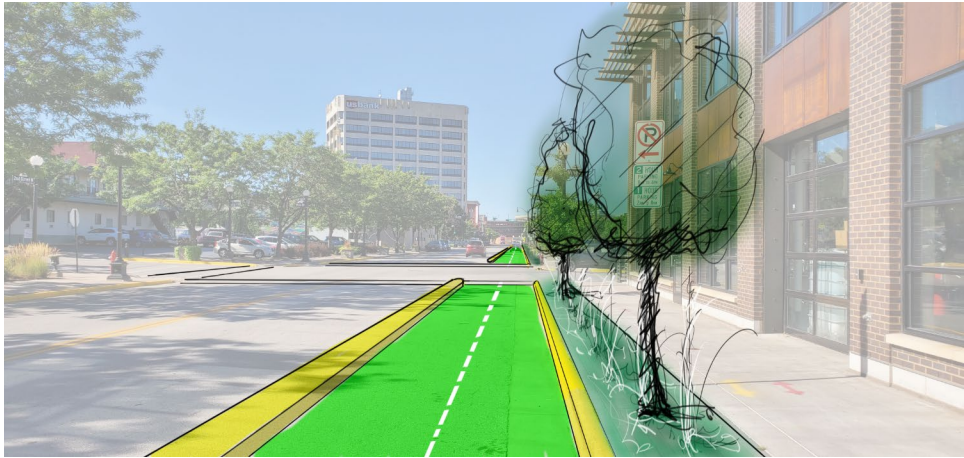


AFTER

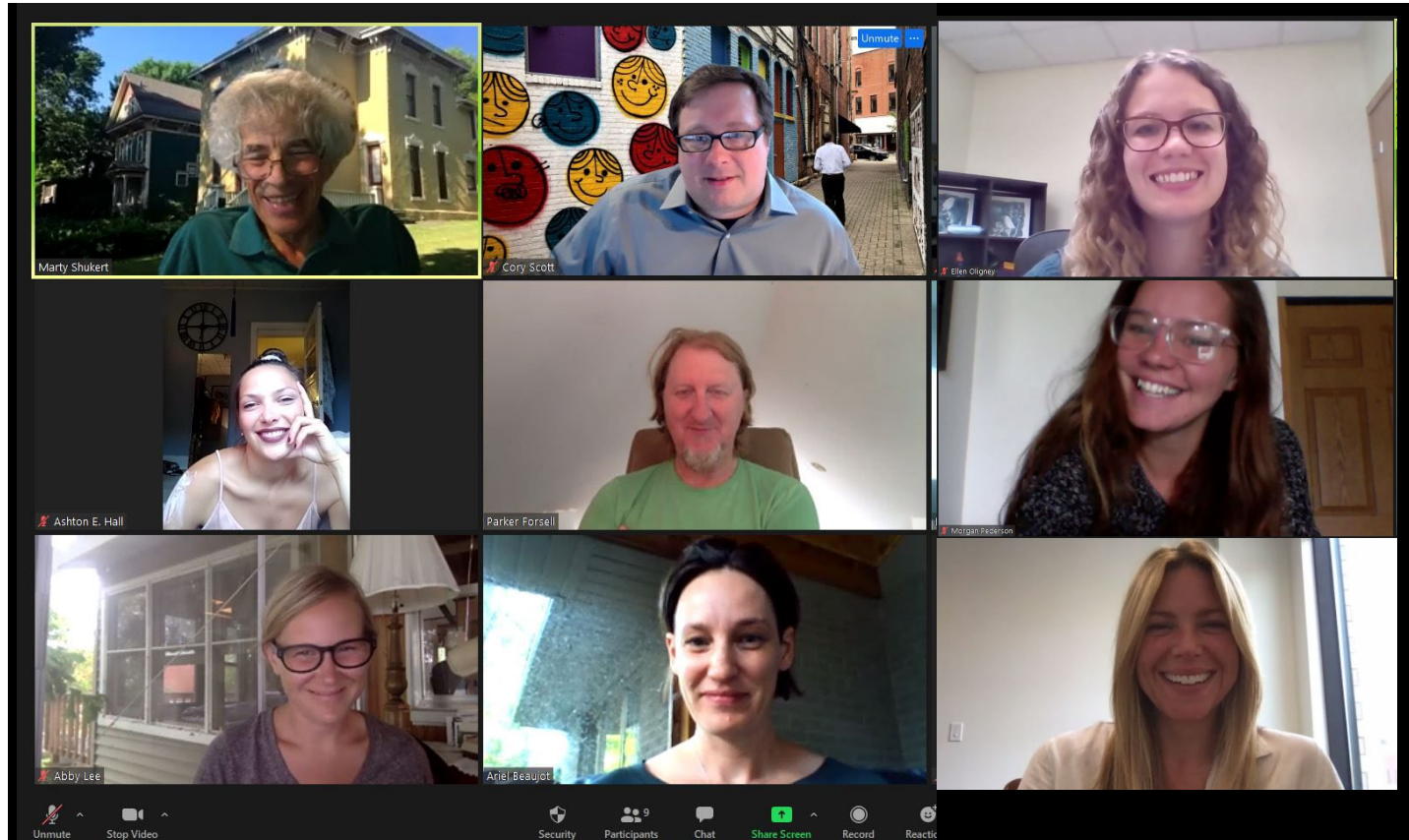
Emerging Concepts



BEFORE



AFTER



More! Focus Groups





In-person Galleries

- City Library
- County Building
- Mainstreet Office

Virtual Gallery

- www.rdgusa.com/pano/Imagine2040



Plan Organization



MARKET
FOR
DEVELOPMENT



Development



NETWORK
OF
STRONG
NEIGHBORHOODS



Housing



A
CONNECTED
CITY



Mobility



DESTINATION
FOR
ALL
PEOPLE



Placemaking



CONFLUENCE
OF
NATURE



Environment
+ Parks

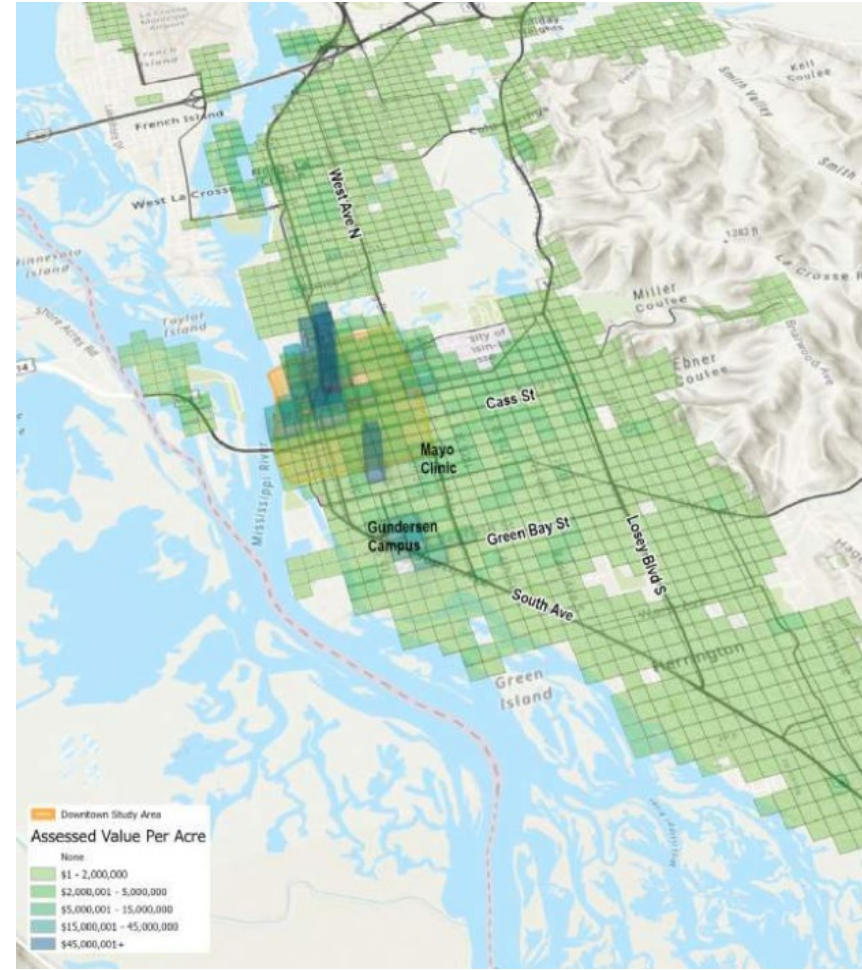
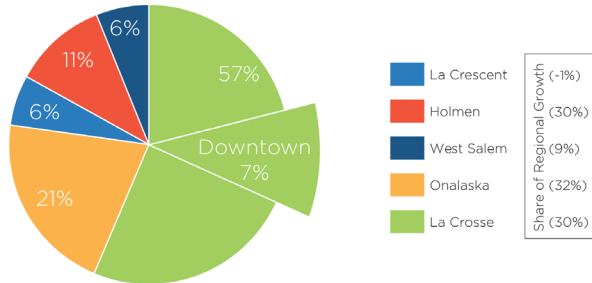


Market for Development | Case for Downtown

Q: How do you prepare a meaningful market study when the data is suspect during a pandemic?

A: Define the audience for its use.

REGIONAL POPULATION AND SHARE OF GROWTH, 2020



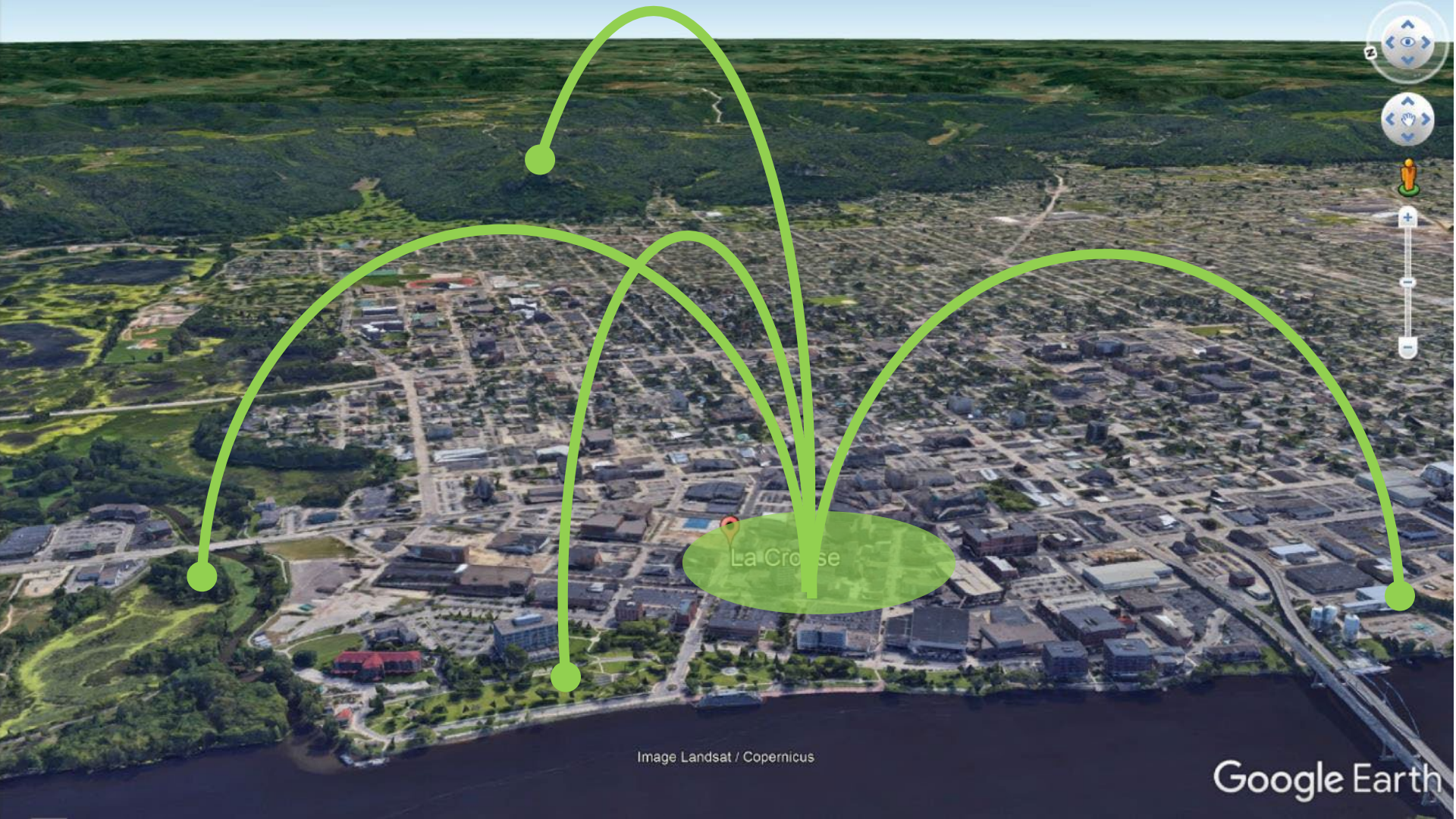
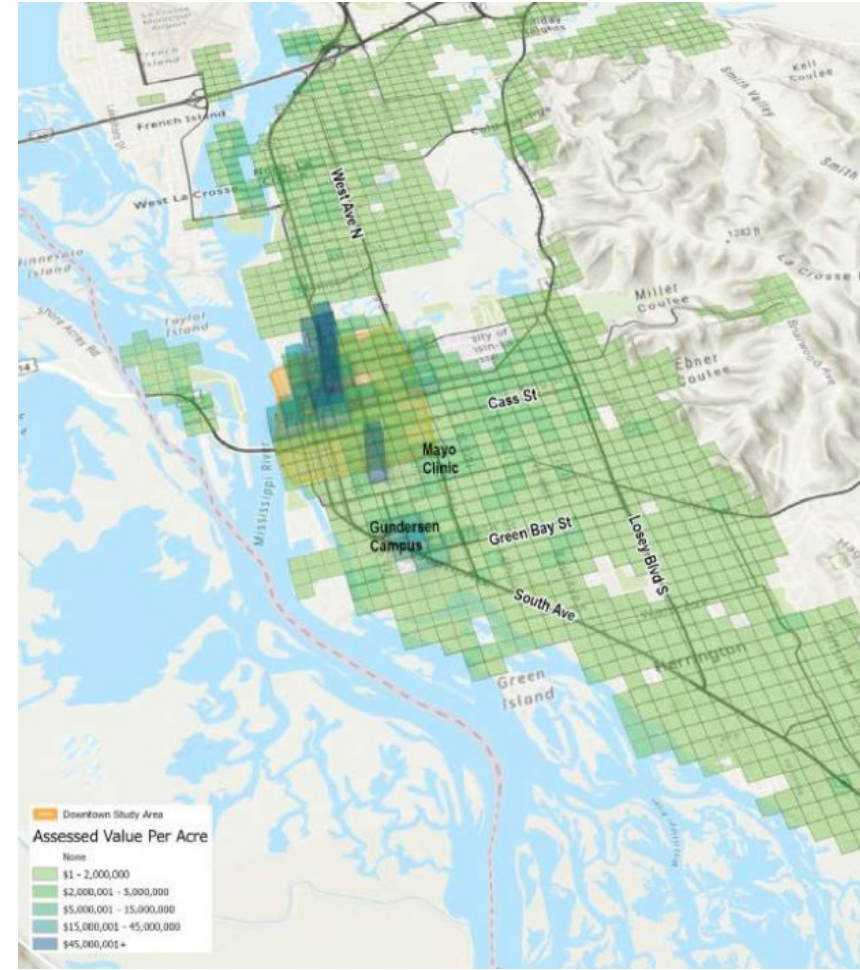


Image Landsat / Copernicus

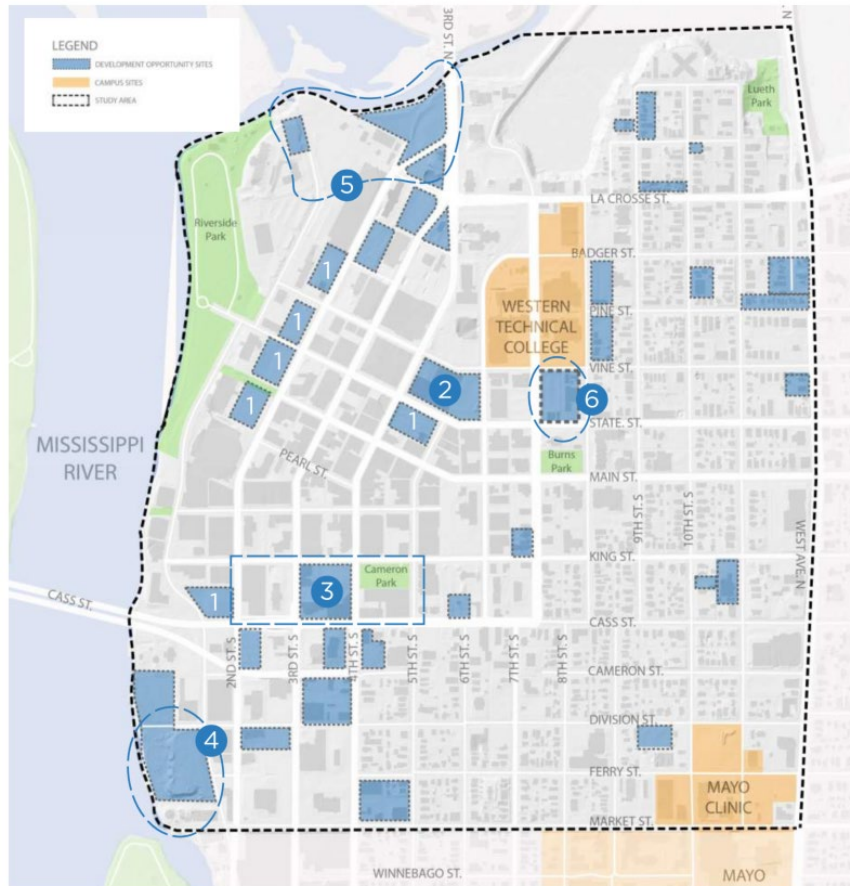
Google Earth

Market for Development | Case for Downtown

1. Holds a **greater share of population growth**
2. Accounts for a sizable share of **commercial value**
3. Supports **daytime activity and nightlife**
4. Generates a **strong share of tax revenue**
5. Provides a **hub for employment**
6. Proves the desire for new mixed-use development



Market for Development | Sites Subject-to-Change



INTENSITY
MEDIUM-HIGH
MEDIUM

BLOCK DIAGRAMS



INTENSITY DEMONSTRATIONS



High-Intensity Mixed Use

FEATURES:

- 5+ Stories
- Main Level: Active Uses
- Upper Level: Residential/Office
- Lower Level: Parking/storage



Medium-High Intensity

FEATURES:

- Rowhomes or Townhomes with independent entries.
- Corner lots can be commercial.
- Shared underground parking
- Shared internal green space



Medium Intensity

FEATURES:

- Small lot, single-family
- Semi attached housing with independent parking.

Market for Development | Sites Subject-to-Change

BLOCK DIAGRAMS

INTENSITY DEMONSTRATIONS

↑ INTENSITY MEDIUM-HIGH
MEDIUM ↓



High-Intensity Mixed Use

FEATURES:

- > 5+ Stories
- > Main Level: Active Uses
- > Upper Level: Residential/ Office
- > Lower Level: Parking/storage



Medium-High Intensity

FEATURES:

- > Rowhomes or Townhomes with independent entries.
- > Corner lots can be commercial
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Medium Intensity

FEATURES:






































- > Small lot, single-family
- > Semi attached housing with independent parking.



Market for Development | Save the details



Market for Development | Save the details

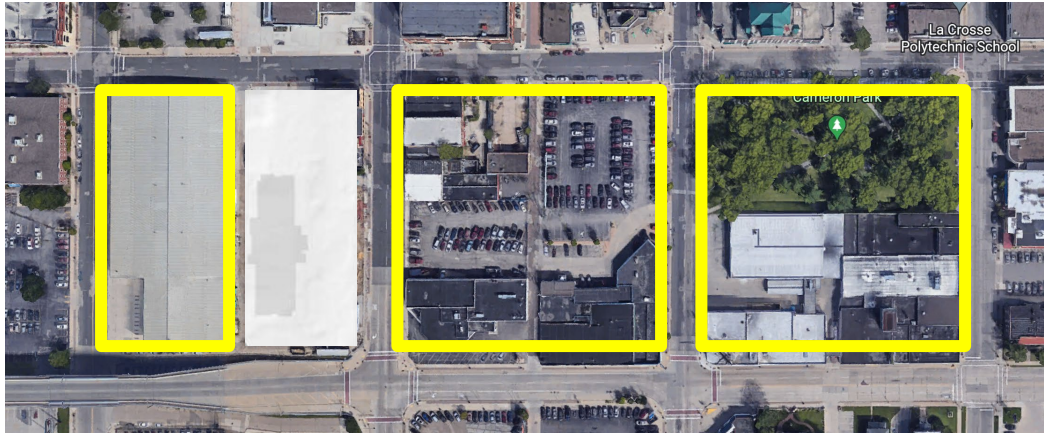
-  1992 City Vision 2000.pdf
-  1994 CityVision2000 Historic Downtown Wayfinding & Streetscape Guidelines.pdf
-  1996 La-Crosse-River-District-Update_12.10.96.pdf
-  2001 Goosetown Neighborhood Plan.pdf
-  2002 Confluence Comprehensive Plan URS.pdf
-  2002 WashburnPlan2002.pdf
-  2004 10th and Cass Preservation and Design Review Standards.pdf
-  2004 City Vision 2020.pdf
-  2004 Downtown Historic Preservation Plan.pdf
-  2004 Downtown Marketing Study.pdf
-  2007 La Crosse First Impressions.pdf
-  2009 Strategic Plan for Sustainability.pdf
-  2011 Port_of_La_Crosse_Harbor and Waterfront Plan.pdf
-  2012 Bicycle_and_Pedestrian_Master Plan.pdf
-  2013_Arts_Board_Strategic_.pdf
-  2014 Riverside North Master Plan.pdf
-  2015 La Crosse Transportation Vision by Toole.pdf
-  2017 Day-Nighttime Strengthening Report.pdf
-  2017 La Crosse Market Analysis by WEDC.pdf
-  2018 Highway 53 Corridor Master Plan.pdf
-  2018 Neighborhood Revitalization Commission Action Plan Slideshow.pdf
-  2018 South_Ave_Multimodal_Assessment.pdf
-  2018 Sustainability Actions Report.pdf
-  2018_Sustainability_Indicat.pdf
-  2019 Housing Fee Report and Affordability.pdf
-  2019 La Crosse Public Market Feasibility.pdf
-  2019 Monitor Street Informational Piece.docx
-  2019 Neighborhood Center Overlay District Outline-Bridgeview.docx
-  2019 Riverside North Planned Development District.pdf
-  2019 Riverside North RDA Progress Update.pdf
-  2020 Action Plan Updates in February 2020 General Meeting Minutes.pdf
-  2020 CCEH Strategic Plan Clean Draft.docx
-  2020 La Crosse Center Brochure.pdf
-  2020 Parking Study Final Report.pdf
-  2020 Parks Strategic Plan 2021-2025.pdf
- 2020 Private Study
-  2020 Salvation Army Facility Study Final 4.21.20.pdf
-  2020_12 DOT Project Letter Draft SMFA_3rd-4th.pdf



Market for Development | Test Fit Precedents

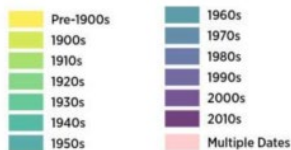
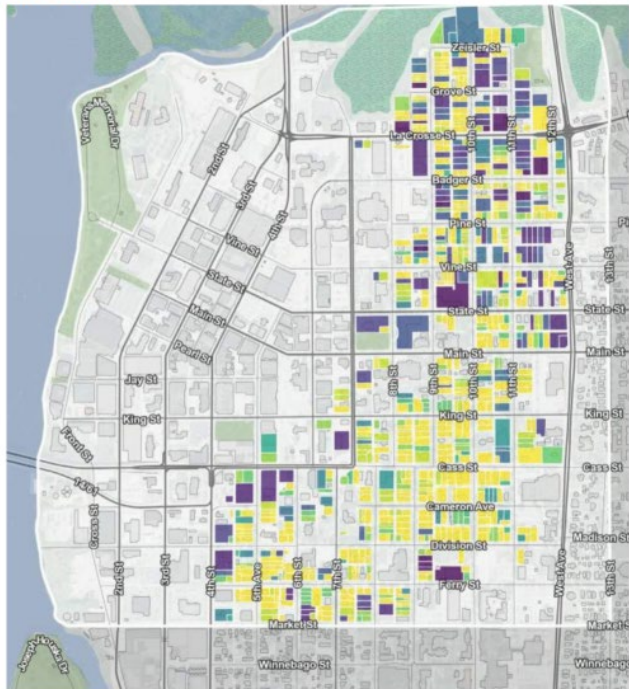


Market for Development | Test Fits



Network of Strong Neighborhoods

YEAR BUILT



↑ NORTH

HOUSING CONDITION HEAT MAP



↑ NORTH

**Demand for
700-1000
units over
20 years in
downtown**

Network of Strong Neighborhoods | Block Test-fit Concepts



Medium-High Intensity Housing Development

Density: -14 DUA

Townhome or rowhomes with shared common space provide currently unavailable housing types that can be built in a full-block or half-block or even quarter block configurations.



Medium Intensity Housing Development

Density: -10 DUA

Small lot single-family homes can be built on a full block or in smaller quarter block configurations allowing for incremental phased development.



1. FORMER GOOSETOWN AREA

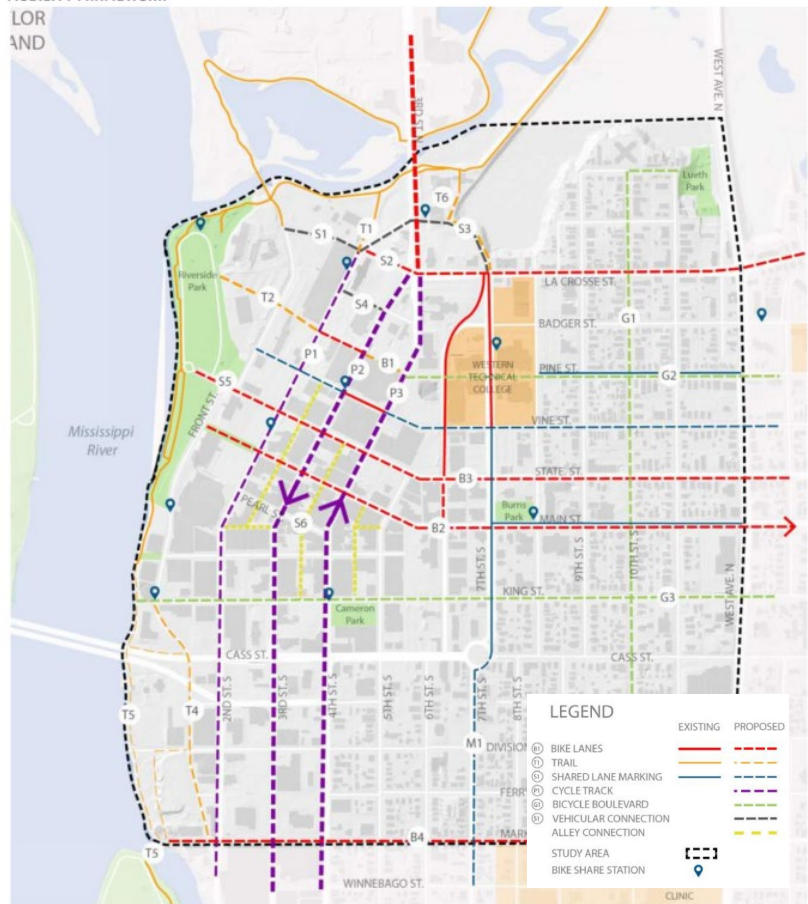
Formerly known as the Goosetown Neighborhood, this area is characterized by older homes, slip in apartments, and small historic commercial structures. Many of the 1970s era apartments are in poor condition and nearing the end of their productive use. Several other older homes have fallen into disrepair and may not be salvageable. As market forces open development opportunities on these sites, a variety of infill opportunities emerge. The diagram to the right illustrates several demonstration projects to provide new housing options on unique existing lots such as narrow, but deep lots.

**Focus is
creating
HOUSING
OPTIONS**



A Connected City | Mobility Projects

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"> - Better access from east side to Riverside Park - Eliminates Front Street cul-de-sac - Opens Oktoberfest site and north riverfront to future development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Right-of-way dedication through Oktoberfest - Illustrated alignment is schematic and may change given specific development plan - Creates a festival street that can be temporarily closed for events |
| S2 | La Crosse Street Improvement | Connects La Crosse Street to 2nd Street | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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"> - Diverts local traffic from the north away from the La Crosse and 3rd Street North intersection - Distributes traffic easily to three downtown corridors - Aligns two offset intersections - Clarifies circulation and site plan | 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"> - Provides local access to and through major redevelopment site - Part of an improved access system around the 3/4th and La Crosse intersection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires street dedication through the Tribune redevelopment site - Shared street with minimal right-of-way |
| 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"> - Eliminates turning movements and conflicts created by offset - Roundabout may provide a public art opportunity to complement eagle monument at the State Street circle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 Street circle |
| S6 | Pearl Street | Redesign of Pearl Street to become a festival street (no curbs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improves Pearl Street's role as a pedestrian environment - Improves connection to La Crosse Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possible replacement of underground utilities. - Needs further investigation. |
| 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"> - Eliminates hazardous convergence of Front and 2nd Street at Market Street - Provides a future green space at Front/2nd triangle with redevelopment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vacation of a portion of Front with development of a green space - Existing rail spur may be removed if possible or retained as part of a local transportation shuttle to Gunderson campus. |



A Connected City | Mobility Projects – Get into the details

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**Downtown
has more
streetscape
designs
than we can
count**

PROTOTYPICAL ENHANCEMENTS



- 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

Circulation Scenarios



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

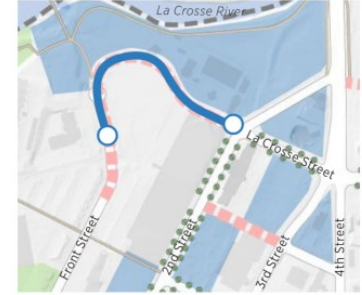


Scenario D: One-way pairs on 3rd and 4th become to two-way traffic to encourage commerce, long truck and bus movements, and bicycling-pedestrian safety and mobility

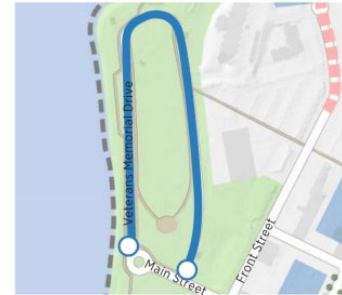
Festival Streets



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.



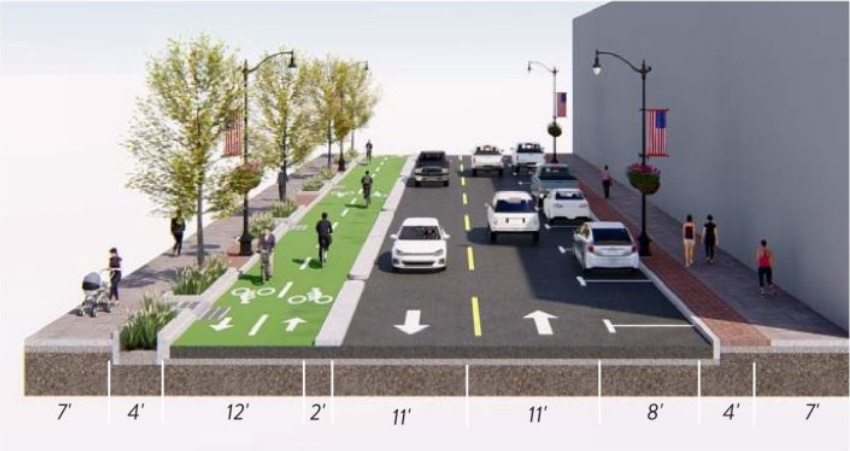
Veteran Memorial Drive can be a festival street or woonerf during events at Riverside Park.



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



Active Transportation



North Concepts

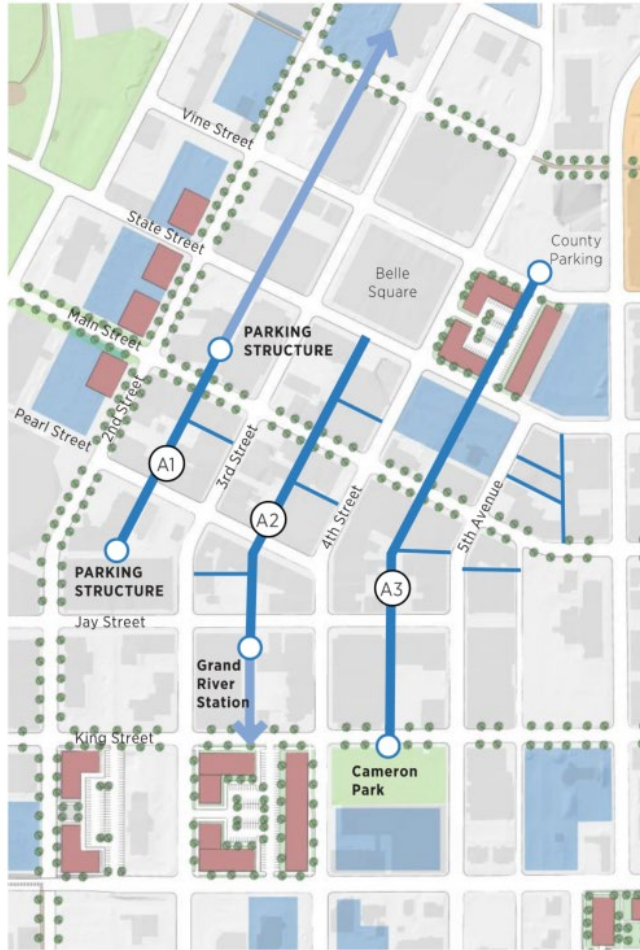


South Concepts

RIVERWALK PATHS



Destination for All People

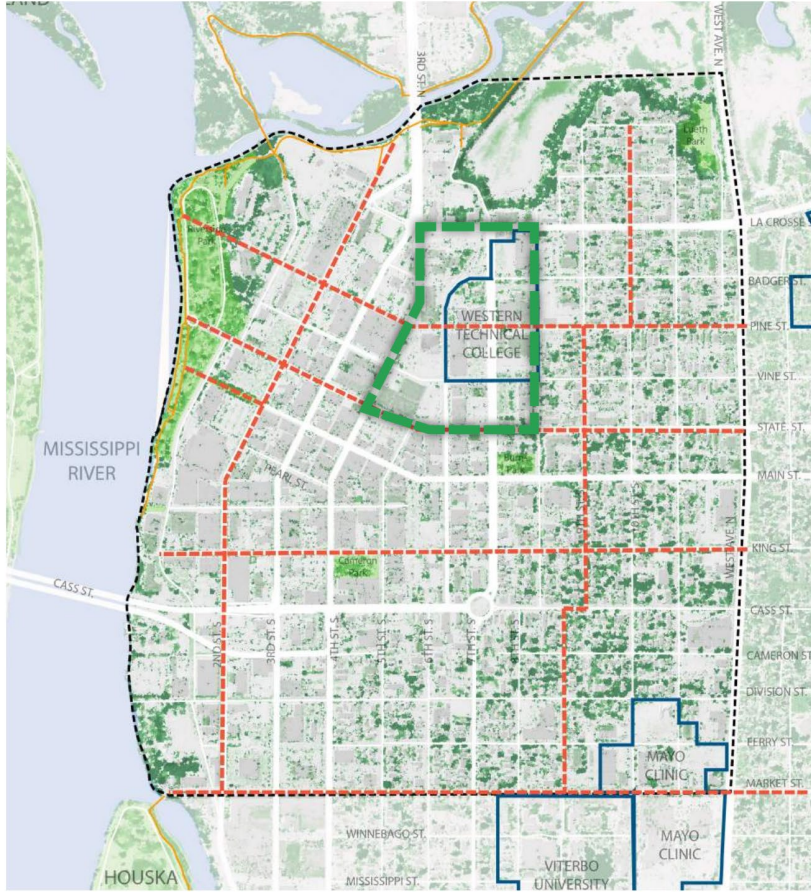


GRAND RIVER gALLEY

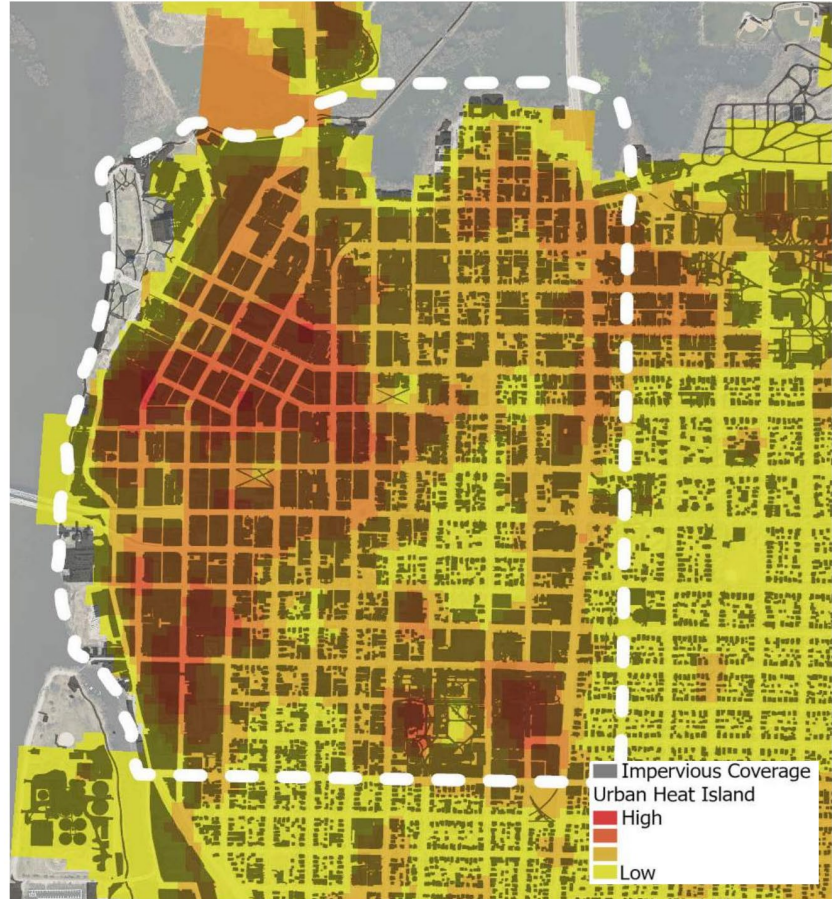


Confluence of Nature

MODEL SUSTAINABLE DISTRICT

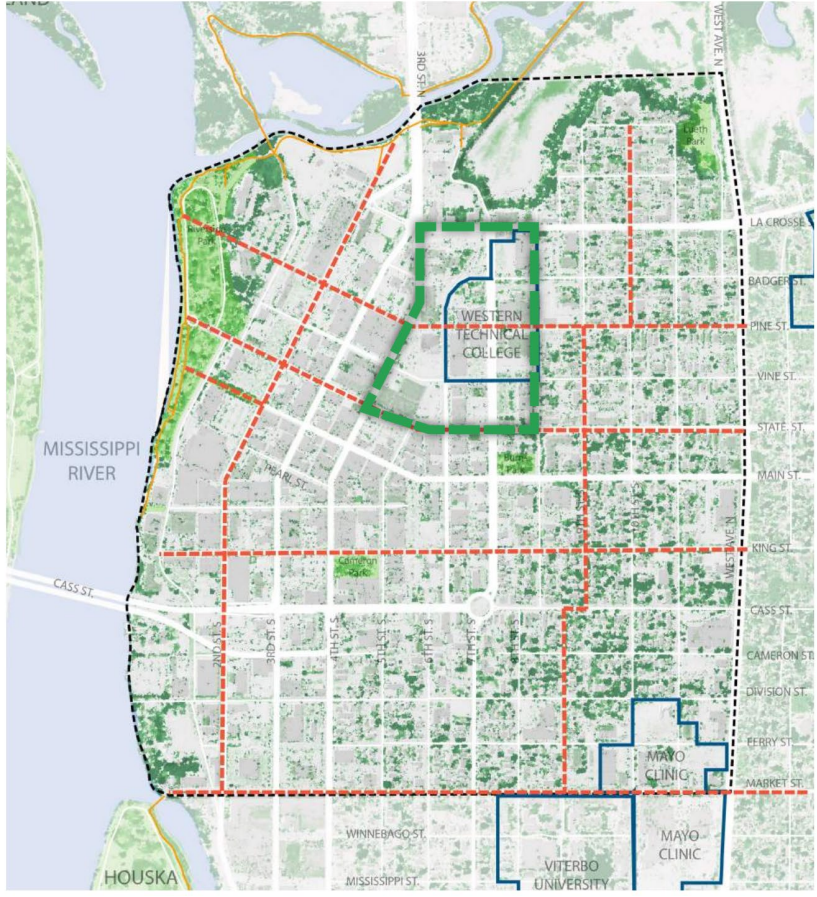


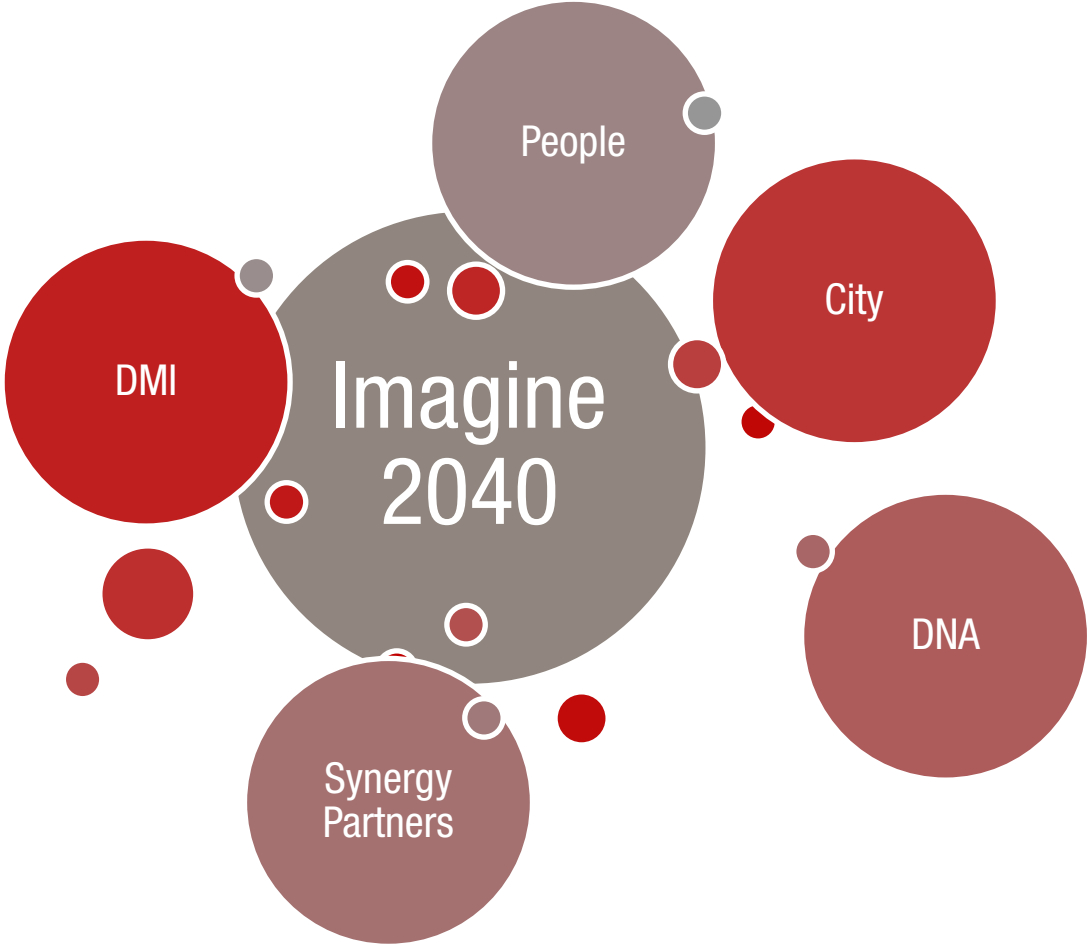
URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT



Confluence of Nature | Model District

MODEL SUSTAINABLE DISTRICT





Implementation | Capital Projects – Pearl Street



Pearl Street Visioning and the Pearl Walkway

- Plan for future enhancements such as 3rd and 4th Street Reconstruction and the cruise ship levee expansion
- Develop construction plans for the section from 2nd Street to Riverside Park
- Develop preliminary concepts for the section from 4th Street to 2nd Street

Current Work

- Data Gathering
- Community Engagement
- Create Project Awareness
- Community Survey
- Precedent Imagery Gathering

What's Next?

- Business and building owners meetings
- Summary of initial engagement
- Preliminary concept development
- Community Workshop #2
- Additional City committee meetings



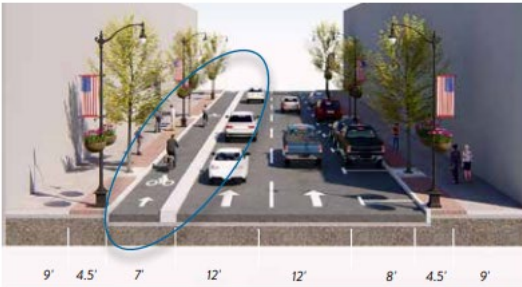
Implementation | Capital Projects – 2nd Street Cycle Track



Implementation | Capital Projects – 3rd & 4th Streets

SCENARIO C: ADD BIKE LANES

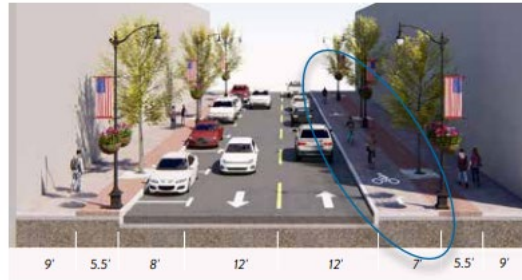
Add bike lanes on 3rd and 4th Streets, requiring removal of parking from one side.



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.

SCENARIO D: CONVERT TO ONE-WAY TO TWO-WAY CIRCULATION

TWO-WAY WITH PARKING



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.



Implementation | Policy

- Continue Funding of Programs
- Strengthen Code Enforcement
- Homelessness
- Strengthen Historic Preservation



- Centralize Access to Services
- Public/Private Partnerships
- Economic Development Synergy



Implementation | Programming and Events

- Festival Streets
- Art District
- Parklets & Street Cafes
- Clean-up Days
- Engaging Public Spaces



Implementation | Other Projects

- Winter Maintenance
- Alley Improvements
- Wayfinding and Banners
- Parking Benefit District



IMAGINE

2040 LA CROSSE DOWNTOWN PLAN

City Vision 2020

About Downtown
Plan Accomplishments
Lessons

Imagine 2040

Process and Pivots
Plan Elements
Lessons



IMAGINE

2040 LA CROSSE DOWNTOWN PLAN

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