

US HIGHWAY 53 CORRIDOR STUDY



CITY OF LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Summary

The creation of the Highway 53 Corridor Plan resulted from collaboration between the City of La Crosse and the Northside Community. A committee comprised of elected officials, business and property owners, neighborhood residents, business organizations and City representatives at large conducted the study over the past 12 months. The overarching importance of this corridor and adjacent neighborhoods cannot be overstated: for a large amount of visitors, this corridor will provide their first view and experience of La Crosse and its control influence on land use and impact in the City. The corridor plan includes analyses of land use, market conditions, parking, sidewalk width, transportation and traffic, and bicycle and pedestrian circulation.

The primary purpose of this Plan is to create a strategy to manage future growth within the corridor in a manner that will foster an attractive destination with strong businesses, vibrant neighborhoods, and beautiful surroundings. The Plan will focus on the strong interrelationship between land use and transportation and a corridor that is safe, comfortable, provides access to the natural amenities offered by the Black River, and is convenient for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

Background Studies

Prior to generating concepts and designs for the Highway 53 Corridor, the Project Team reviewed past plans, conducted research, prepared studies, and interacted with the community. The Project Team learned many important facts and opinions about the overall corridor and redevelopment opportunities through this research and studies. Other information gathered during analysis of specific plan elements included market analysis, land use/zoning, development patterns, transportation, urban design, environmental factors, and health impacts. The Project Team also thoroughly reviewed the outcomes of the UPTOWNE Summit.

Community Engagement

As the Plan will detail, the vision created for the Highway 53 Corridor was assembled with community engagement. The major forces, issues, and opportunities associated with the corridor have been defined through a series of interactive committee meetings, business owner interviews, community workshops, and interviews with developers. The public was invited to study the maps of what currently exists and to imagine what its future potential could be. Results included a connected corridor with identified pulse nodes of activities-areas of increased intense compact development, pedestrian-friendly, and designed to provide places where residents and visitors could meet, socialize, and find the goods and services they need for as a secondary downtown/neighborhood node system. Enhanced transportation modes were envisioned to include walkways, bike-ways, and improved public transit.

Corridor Plan Recommendations

Design Concept

The Pulse Node concept serves as the underlying guideline of the redevelopment plan for the entire Highway 53 Corridor. It can be envisioned as a string of high energy mixed-use and commercial areas that serve the neighborhoods and broader community within. Less intense land uses, such as mixed density residential and open space are located between, and provide a buffer with quieter amenities and living spaces.

Vision + Goals + Objectives

The vision, goals, and objectives for this planning process have been refined and adopted by the Highway 53 Corridor Master Plan Steering Committee and have driven the creation of this Master Plan. The Highway 53 Corridor and adjacent neighborhoods are on the path to be an even greater place to live, work, and play for all people.

GOAL #1

- Grow and enhance the Corridor as a location for businesses.

GOAL #2

- Establish a land use pattern that promotes community.

GOAL #3

- Improve all modes of transportation.

GOAL #4

- Create an enhanced gateway to the City of La Crosse.

Urban Design Principles

A series of urban design principles and a design concept were defined early in the planning process. They inform the development of designs and recommendations to assist in the prioritization of potential implementation strategies and projects.



PRINCIPLE #1: Advance Livability

Design to heighten the human experience and connection to the sense of place. Create enhanced connections between neighborhoods, businesses, recreation, and natural surroundings.



PRINCIPLE #2: Strive for Diversity

Encourage diverse uses, buildings, and environments to promote inclusivity and access.



PRINCIPLE #3: Promote Neighborhoods

Enhance the neighborhood character, access to the Black River, and create a memorable gateway to the City. Relate new developments to the physical scale and character of the neighborhoods. Create a corridor that residents and visitors can understand and easily navigate by creating memorable landmarks, destinations, aesthetics, and sense of place.

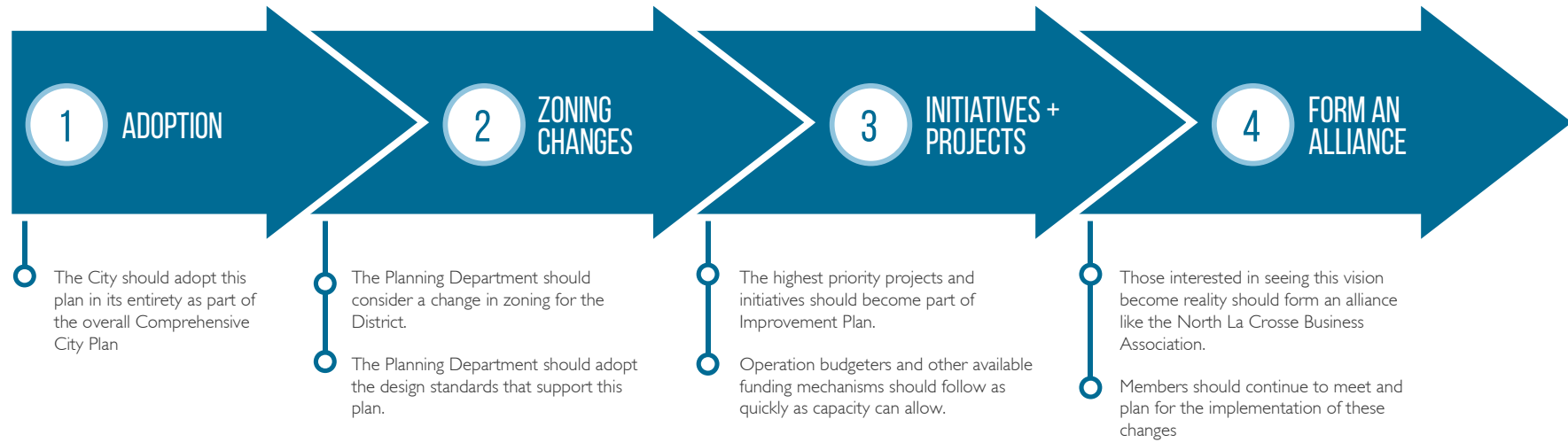


PRINCIPLE #4: Foster Sustainability + Resiliency

Create a social, economical, and environmentally sustainable corridor for the future by focusing on land use as the pertinent influencer of transportation corridors.

Implementation

The rate at which this plan's recommendations are implemented depends on community determination, political will, and funding availability. The Plan details many things that can and ought to be done, but there are four specific items that can and should be prioritized.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Highway 53 Corridor Master Plan?

The purpose of this Plan is to create a strategy to manage future growth within the Corridor in a manner that will foster an attractive destination with strong businesses in a sustainable and economic setting with vibrant neighborhoods, and beautiful places. It will feature gateway experiences with streets that are safe, comfortable, and convenient for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

When completed, what is the Community going to do with the Master Plan?

The Community will use the Master Plan to guide future changes towards the design concepts, vision, goals, objectives, and urban design principles contained within this document through much public engagement and input from community members, businesses, and other organizations having an interest in the studied area. This will hopefully be accomplished through a combination of grass-roots, community, and governmental efforts.

How is funding prioritized for the projects in the Master Plan?

The Master Plan contains an implementation section that gives many recommendations for achieving the vision of the Master Plan. There is further detail regarding the priority, cost, length of time to complete, and likely responsible parties/partners. Grass-roots organizations, community organizations, and governments should use this section to find efforts that fit their resources and capacity to successfully achieve the recommendations, typically focusing on high priority recommendations first.

How long does the Master Plan take to be implemented?

This Master Plan intends to provide the framework for necessary land use, redevelopment, and transportation decisions on the Highway 53 Corridor for the next 15-20 years. The Master Plan is meant to be adaptable to changing needs, yet contain concepts, vision, goals, objective, and urban design principles that remain relevant far beyond the time frame. The rate of implementation will depend on the amount of funding and resources available, the will of the Community, and adherence by future policymakers.

Can the Master Plan be changed once it is finalized?

Yes, the Master Plan is meant to be adaptable to the ever-changing needs of the Community and changes can be made formally or informally. However, significant changes to the concepts, vision, goals, objectives, and urban design principles could erode the effort that went in to creating this Master Plan.

Who reviews the Master Plan?

The steps and elements of the Master Plan were made publicly available through the planning and design process. It was further studied, scrutinized, and developed by the Steering Committee, City staff and policymakers, Community members, businesses, and other organizations who had an interest in the Corridor area.

Who sees that the Master Plan is implemented?

The recommendations in this plan will require the efforts of grass-roots, community, and government. The recommendations include empowering the Neighborhood Associations, North La Crosse Business Association, Steering Committee, City staff and elected officials, or a combination of the above to continue to advocate for and oversee the implementation of the Master Plan.

How can I participate?

Anyone can participate in the implementation of the Master Plan. You can become active in your Neighborhood Association, the North La Crosse Business Association, a community organization or reach out directly to your councilperson or other City representatives to participate.

If my property or home is marked for potential redevelopment, is it going to be demolished for redevelopment?

The purpose of this Master Plan is to create a strategy to manage future growth within the Corridor in a manner that will foster an attractive destination with strong businesses in a sustainable economic setting, vibrant neighborhoods, and beautiful places. It will feature gateway experiences with streets that are safe, comfortable, and convenient for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. Successful implementation of the plan will require some future development and/or redevelopment. There are no known plans for redevelopment or major public works projects scheduled at this time other than the Riverside North Development. Most successful developments or redevelopments take many years to acquire necessary properties and typically this is accomplished through willing sales of properties. Condemnation, floodplain removal, and eminent domain are methods that are sometimes used by communities to address land use issues, but they are typically used after many other methods are exhausted or found not to be feasible.

