



City of La Crescent  
Comprehensive Plan

May 1999



Hoisington Koegler Group Inc.



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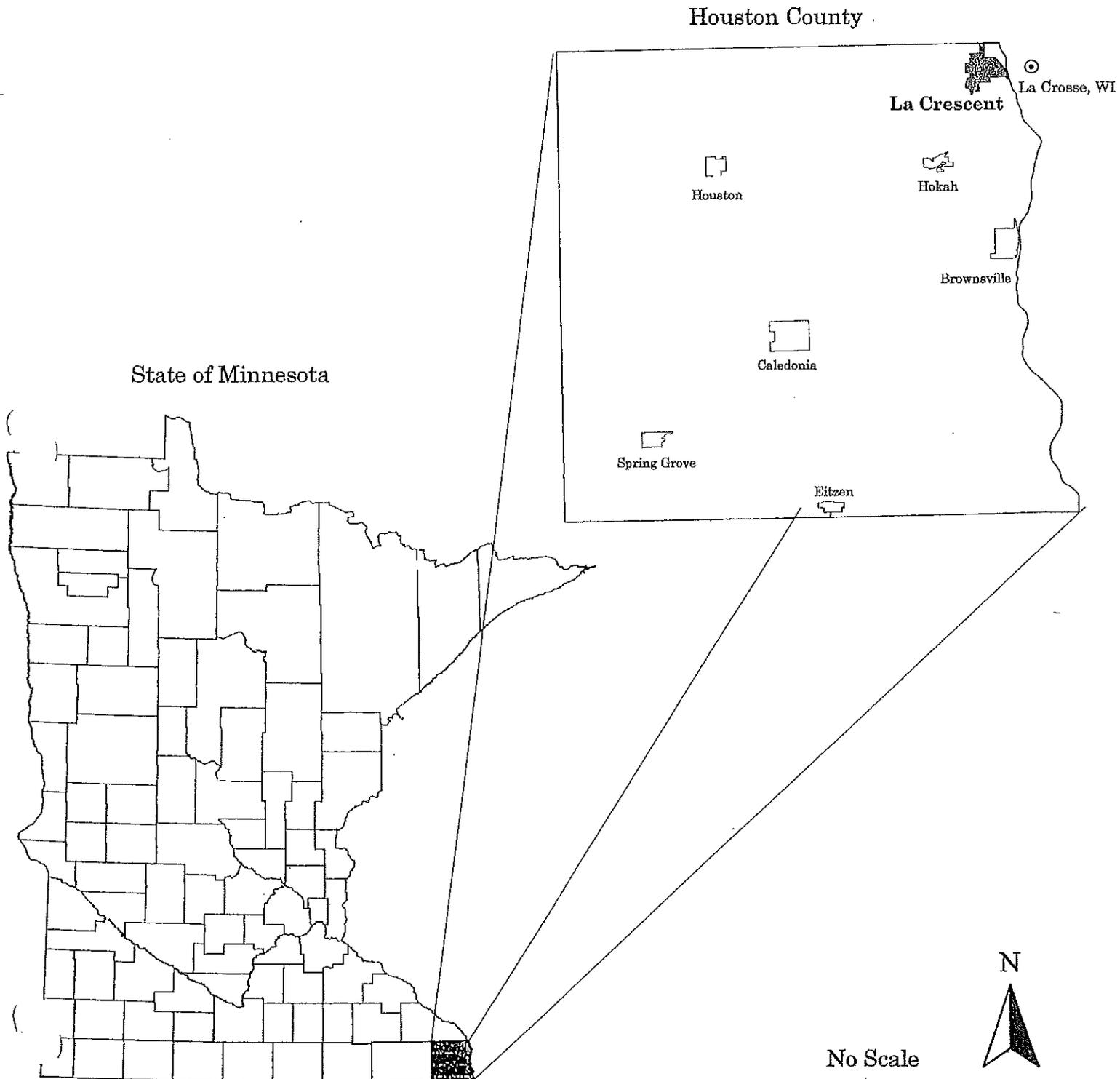
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# Regional Map

## City of La Crescent, Minnesota



## **Introduction**

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The City of La Crescent has been experiencing accelerated growth over the past decade. This growth has been in part attributable to the proximity to La Crosse, Wisconsin and the availability of land for new residential development. Many people seeking the qualities of small town life and the amenities of a metropolitan area find La Crescent has the best of both making it a highly desirable place to live.

This growth is affecting many aspects of the community's character, make-up and identity. New residential developments bring additional people, children to the school systems, and place increasing demands on city and commercial services. Without careful consideration of the implications, the reasons people were attracted to La Crescent may be lost.

The Comprehensive Plan is a tool intended to guide decisions relating to land use, public facilities, capital improvements, and influences the rate, timing and location of future growth. The plan should not be static, but dynamic so it is better able to react to the changing conditions in the community. That is not to say that any one single event or proposal in the community is reason enough to warrant revisions to the plan. The citizens, Planning Commission, and Council will need to evaluate changing conditions against the Vision and goals described in the plan. It is through this process that the needs and desires of the people of La Crescent are fulfilled.

## Setting

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La Crescent is located in the southeastern corner of Minnesota in Houston County along the banks of the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River Valley provides a unique setting with its bluff environment that frames the community. These bluffs rise over 300 feet above the river providing a dramatic backdrop. Due to the rugged steep slopes, the bluffs have been able to retain many of their natural qualities. Development in and around the city has been forced to conform to the flatter valley floor.

Although located along the Mississippi River, the community is somewhat separated physically from the river by backwater areas. Blue Lake and the adjacent marsh lands that provide seasonal flooding relief prevent La Crescent from reaching the river. The Shore Acres residential area is the only area that fronts on the main channel. This area sits on a long finger of land built for navigational and flood control purposes.

The existing highway systems serving the community make it easily accessible from all directions. Major highways include U.S. 14/61, T.H. 16, and T.H. 26. Interstate 90 is also located 2 miles north of La Crescent connected by U.S. 14/61. County Roads 6, 25, and 29 provide local highway connections. La Crescent is 2 miles from La Crosse via the highway 14/61 bridge. Rochester is 68 miles to the west via I-90 and the Twin Cities are 140 miles north and west via I-90 and U.S. 52. Winona is 26 miles north via U.S. 14/61. Caledonia, the county seat, is approximately 17 miles southwest of La Crescent. The highway 14/61 bridge connecting La Crescent and La Crosse is the southernmost river crossing in Minnesota. The next river crossing is 30 miles to the south in Lansing, Iowa.

## Background

### Historical Data/Future Projections

A summary of indicators was gathered to analyze trends in the community. This historical data is then used to make assumptions and projections for how the community will grow and develop in the future. Although any projections that look out more than a decade or more are subject to many uncertainties, it prepares La Crescent for future trends.

### Population

The population of the community will continue to increase over the next two decades. This trend is consistent with the population increases expected for metropolitan areas of the state which includes La Crescent as part of the greater La Crosse metropolitan area. The rural areas of Houston County are projected to lose population to communities like La Crescent. Similar to other communities located in close proximity to metropolitan areas, regional economic factors will influence the community's rate and timing of growth. The greater La Crosse area is expected to see increases in population from 97,618 in 1995 to 117,357 by the year 2020, an increase of more than 20 percent.

Table 1. Population

Year	La Crescent		Houston County		State of Minnesota	
	Population	Percent Change	Population	Percent Change	Population	Percent Change
1940	815					
1950	1229	51%				
1960	2624	114				
1970	3142	20				
1980	3674	11				
1990	4311	17	18,497		4,375,099	
1996 est.	4557	5.4	18,630	< 1	4,527,690	3.2
			(1995)			
2000	5160	11.1	18,560	< (1)	4,649,480	3
2010	5882	12.3	18,490	< (1)	4,861,290	4.4
2020	6499	10.5	18,750	2	5,054,840	3.9

Source: Office of the State Demographer, 1997

### Age distribution

The age distribution for the years 1980 and 1990 is shown below. During this 10 year time frame, the median age increased from 29.6 years to 33.1 years. This is consistent with the aging population trends in Minnesota and the nation. The age groups that will continue to grow during this decade include the baby boomers from 50 to 59 years as well as the group over 65.

Table 2. Age Distribution

Age	1980	Percent	1990	Percent	Change
Under 5	268	7.3	364	8.4	+
5-9	253	6.9	353	8.2	+
10-14	306	8.3	330	7.6	-
15-19	368	10.0	248	5.7	-

20-24	341	9.3	208	4.8	-
25-29	321	8.7	366	8.5	-
30-34	288	7.8	442	10.0	+
35-39	203	5.5	286	6.6	+
40-44	188	5.1	356	8.2	+
45-49	214	5.8	177	4.1	-
50-54	216	5.9	218	5.0	-
55-59	179	4.9	151	3.5	-
60-64	146	4.0	258	6.0	+
65-69	113	3.1	149	3.4	+
70-74	86	2.3	171	4.0	+
75 and over	184	5.0	234	5.4	+
Median	29.6		33.1		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Households

The average household size is expected to continue to decrease in the community. A number of factors including an aging population, empty nesters, and fewer children per family contribute to these falling numbers. This decrease in family size is a trend that is not only being experienced in La Crescent but throughout the state and nation.

Table 3. Household Size

Year	Household Size
1980	2.8
1990	2.64
1996 est.	2.6
2000	2.5

Source: Office of the State Demographer, 1997

### Homeowner and Renter Characteristics

The City of La Crescent has a fairly large percentage of housing units that are owner-occupied at over 75%. This is supportive of the notion that the community is largely a single-family home community and is a bedroom to the larger center of La Crosse. One-quarter of the occupied housing units are renter occupied.

Table 4. Homeowner and Renter Characteristics

	Owner-occupied housing units		Renter-occupied housing units	
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total
City of La Crescent	1,248	76.5%	382	23.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Educational Attainment

Within La Crescent there are over 2800 persons that are 25 years and older that have or have had the opportunity to participate in public or private secondary education. Of this total, 2328 persons, or almost 83% graduated from high school or earned an equivalency or higher form of education. About one-quarter of the community 25 years and older completed college or university study with a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Table 5. Education Status

	Persons 25 years and over		
	Percent High School Graduate or higher	Percent with degree or higher	Bachelor's
2808	82.9	22.8	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Income Status

The measure of income per person in 1989 dollars is shown below with the exception of the State number which is represented in 1990 dollars. People that live in La Crescent on average earn approximately \$2000 more per year than the rest of the County. Both the City and County are however, behind the average per capita income for the State by almost \$6,000 and \$8,000 respectively. In terms of measuring median household income, La Crescent is higher than the County average and equal to the State averages for the year 1989. (The State figure of \$33,240 is in 1993 dollars and would be lower in 1989 dollars.)

Table 6. Income Status

	City of La Crescent	Houston County	State of Minnesota
Per Capita Income in 1989 dollars	13,458	11,587	19,373 (1990)
Median Household income in 1989 dollars	33,025	25,846	33,240 (1993)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Poverty Status

The poverty status is a measure of persons that do not make at least 60 percent of the median per capita income in 1989. On a percentage basis, there are fewer persons below the poverty level in La Crescent than in the County and State.

Table 7. Poverty Status

	City of La Crescent	Houston County	State of Minnesota
Percent of persons with income in 1989 below poverty level	7.2	8.8	10.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Employment

Job growth in La Crescent is expected to remain steady with slight increases over the next 15 years in all sectors of the local economy. Service related jobs will continue to provide the largest segment of employment in La Crescent increasing by 12%. Modest growth is also expected in manufacturing positions. Employment gains in retail trade lag behind the growth of other sectors at 6%. Employment growth outside La Crescent in the greater La Crosse area is expected over the time period. Of note is retail trade positions where increases of more than 20% projected.

Table 8. Projected Employment

Sector	Projected Employment for La Crescent TAZs by Year			
	1994	2000	2010	2020
Manufacturing	362	383	408	403
Service	532	562	603	599
Retail Trade	235	244	250	241
Other	0	0	0	0
Total	1,129	1,190	1,260	1,244

Source: University of Wisconsin - La Crosse, Population, Employment and Dwelling Unit Projections 1995-2020.

### Labor Force

The labor force, or those persons who are available to work, is split equally between males and females. Approximately 2338 persons, or 73%, of the total labor force is working with an unemployment rate in 1990 of 4.7%. Of the total 2216 persons employed, over 90 % drive to work. Less than 10 % carpool and 0.3% use some form of public transportation.

Table 9. 1990 Employment Status and Journey to Work Characteristics

Labor Force								
Total	Female	Percent in labor force		% Unemployed	Workers means of transportation to work			
		Total	Female		Total	% using car, truck, or van	% in carpools	Percent using public transportation
3201	1651	73	67.5	4.7	2216	91.6	8.3	0.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Construction Activity

Building activity in the community has been in an upswing during the past 7 years. The number of new homes built each year ranges from 19 to 24 with a large jump to 40 homes in 1996. Valuations have continued to increase for this time period. The average home valuation in 1992 was \$89,477 and has increased each year, except for a slight dip in 1995, to a 1996 valuation of \$131,485. Other construction activity includes new commercial and industrial buildings and alterations thereto, as well as residential property improvements.

Table 10. Construction Activity

Year	New Homes	Valuation	Average Valuation	Other Permits	Valuation	Total Valuation
1990	20					
1991	19					
1992	22	\$1,968,500	\$89,477		\$373,406	\$2,341,906
1993	24	2,601,500	108,396		666,250	3,267,750
1994	19	2,187,500	115,132		943,480	3,130,980
1995	25	2,802,000	112,080		791,295	3,593,295
1996	40	5,259,419	131,485		1,085,960	6,345,379

Source: City of La Crescent

## **A Vision for La Crescent**

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Articulating a common vision for “what La Crescent wants to be” is an important foundation for the comprehensive plan. The vision statement serves as a declaration of purpose for the plan. It will be used as a constant reminder during the preparation of the plan of what has been identified as the desired outcome of the process and the product. After the plan has eventually been adopted, the community should review the vision statement to maintain its focus. The vision statement should make a strong statement that is indicative of the importance of comprehensive planning for the future of La Crescent.

### *Vision Statement*

La Crescent will continue to maintain a unique setting in the Mississippi River Valley by providing residents the ability to share and enjoy many rural and urban amenities without compromising quality of life.

*As growth in the community occurs, development will be sensitive to the natural and built environments and invoke community pride and a sense of place.*

*Economic development efforts will help create a more sustainable economy in La Crescent by offering residents employment opportunities and a range of goods and services.*

*The influence of the apple industry will continue to be an important part of the past and future identity of the community.*

*The citizens of La Crescent will play an active role in building community character and tradition through participation and sharing of life.*

### **Guiding the Vision**

Guiding principles are intended to serve as statements of more specific criteria by which ideas, concepts and components of the comprehensive plan can be judged. They are useful during the preparation of the plan as well as in the future use and actual application of the plan's recommendations. La Crescent will continue to evolve over time, generally in accordance with the adopted comprehensive plan. Decisions on issues that are not specifically addressed in the plan however, will be necessary to react to unique circumstances or conditions that were unknown at the time the plan was assembled. Because of this, it is important that the tone of the guiding principles be upheld. In doing so the principles will help ensure that decisions that are made are consistent with the overall direction for the community that is articulated in the comprehensive plan.

Together, the vision statement and guiding principles serve the following purposes:

- They orient the community to the future, even to a future that is twenty years distant.

- They require *imagination*, recognizing that the direction they set today will be the reality of the future.
- They look to *current conditions and community traditions* for clues to the appropriate future.
- They are based on a *shared understanding* of what the community desires for itself.
- They will be used as *tools for evaluation* of proposals, projects, ideas and future directions.
- They will be an *anchor during conflict*, a way of finding common ground and shared values.
- They become a *basis for coordination and cooperation*.
- They are a *source of energy and enthusiasm* for maintaining a commitment to the future of La Crescent.

### Guiding Principles

- **Retain small town character** - The community prides itself on its people and strong community spirit. Downtown will be a gathering place for daily activities and other celebrations. Continued community growth away from the core will require inviting neighborhoods where people are encouraged to meet their neighbors and contribute to community prosperity.
- **Encourage commercial and industrial developments** - Efforts will be made to promote additional commercial and industrial areas in La Crescent to provide a larger tax base and employment opportunities within the City. Such uses will be planned carefully to minimize impacts on residential neighborhoods and preserve natural features
- **Preserve natural and scenic qualities** - The unique environment along the Mississippi River is an integral feature that should be reflected in future growth. Bluff features and river corridors should be preserved for all to enjoy.
- **Improve access** - The presence of regional transportation systems provide the opportunity to capture many commercial and tourism related opportunities. Roadway improvements should incorporate the design of identifiable access points to the community. Access should be efficient and integrate with road networks that are designed to handle traffic volumes.
- **A viable commercial core** - The function of downtown in relation to the community and the outlying region is critical to health of the City. The community should aggressively grow and diversify commercial uses that serve local and regional needs.
- **An attractive and safe place to live** - The community will continue to emphasize an attractive and safe environment that affords residents the opportunity to interact with their neighbors. Public and private gathering spaces located throughout the community will accommodate formal and informal gathering which help support a strong sense of community.
- **Connection to River** - Develop a physical connection to the river that links the core of the community. A link between the river's historical roots and future community development efforts provide opportunities to maintain La Crescent's identity.

### Community Vision Workshop

A community workshop was held to gather an understanding of citizens vision of the community. Citizens were asked to respond to three questions related to the future direction of the community. This

vision is expressed in many forms from what people like and dislike about the community to how they would like to see it evolve. These impressions help form the framework for developing the plan.

**What are your hopes and dreams, your vision of La Crescent? Imagine yourself in 2010, what do you see, feel, hear and smell?**

#### Recreation

- Youth activities center
- Improve recreational opportunities – walking, bike trails, sidewalks, movie theater, swimming center, soccer, golf
- Expanding park services – biking/walking trails

#### Education

- Improved educational opportunities – library, auditorium, civic center
- Clean safe town and schools
- Fine arts/library
- Busing/Education growth

#### Government

- New City Hall
- La Crescent as County Seat – new courthouse, buildings, improved county services

#### Local Economy

- Enlarged and visible central business district
- Development of larger business district
- Well planned business district
- Tourism development
- Commercial development
- Expand the business district vertically with some outward growth
- Industrial Park

#### Community Image

- Unique Minnesota flavor and identity
- New school
- New industrial buildings
- New construction
- Expand city boundaries
- Restaurants
- Hotel/restaurant

#### Transportation

- Stoplights at South 14<sup>th</sup> and North 4<sup>th</sup>
- Alternative transportation
- Traffic flow
- Improved access to the city
- Smooth traffic flow
- Mass transit
- Improved transit plans

Using the collective vision, identify what strengths and opportunities exist in the community to help achieve this collective vision.

#### Location

- Easy Tourist Accessibility (3 highways)
- Location
- Proximity to La Crosse

#### Community Ties

- Strong Community Spirit
- Good Church and Community Relationships – Strong morals
- Higher educational level of citizens
- People
- Higher median incomes – strong employment
- Involved citizens
- Chamber of Commerce and service groups

#### Growth

- Capacity potential for growth
- Growing population
- Safe, clean, “new” community
- Need and opportunity for development

#### Environment

- Natural beauty of community
- Scenic beauty
- Overall natural beauty of area

#### Governmental relations

- Good relationship with MNDOT
- Good working relationships with adjacent states, cities, and counties
- Local government
- Good community services

#### Other

- Improved athletic and recreation facilities
- Define gateways to community
- Through traffic US 14/61 and SR 16

Using the collective vision, identify what weaknesses and threats exist in the community that may hinder this collective vision.

#### Local issues

- City/Township border
- Resistance to change
- Rural vs. City

#### Downtown

- Physical Size and age of downtown
- Lack of larger business community
- No family restaurant
- No room for commercial development
- "Quaint Touches" in the downtown, such as lamp posts, gardens, and water fountains
- Lack of parking

#### Transportation

- Lack of public transit
- Lack of community History
- Lack of residential turnover
- Transportation hazards

#### Location

- Commercial taxes are higher than La Crosse
- Dependency on La Crosse
- Location within the state of Minnesota
- Present resources not adequate to deal with growth rate

#### Economy

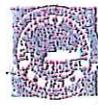
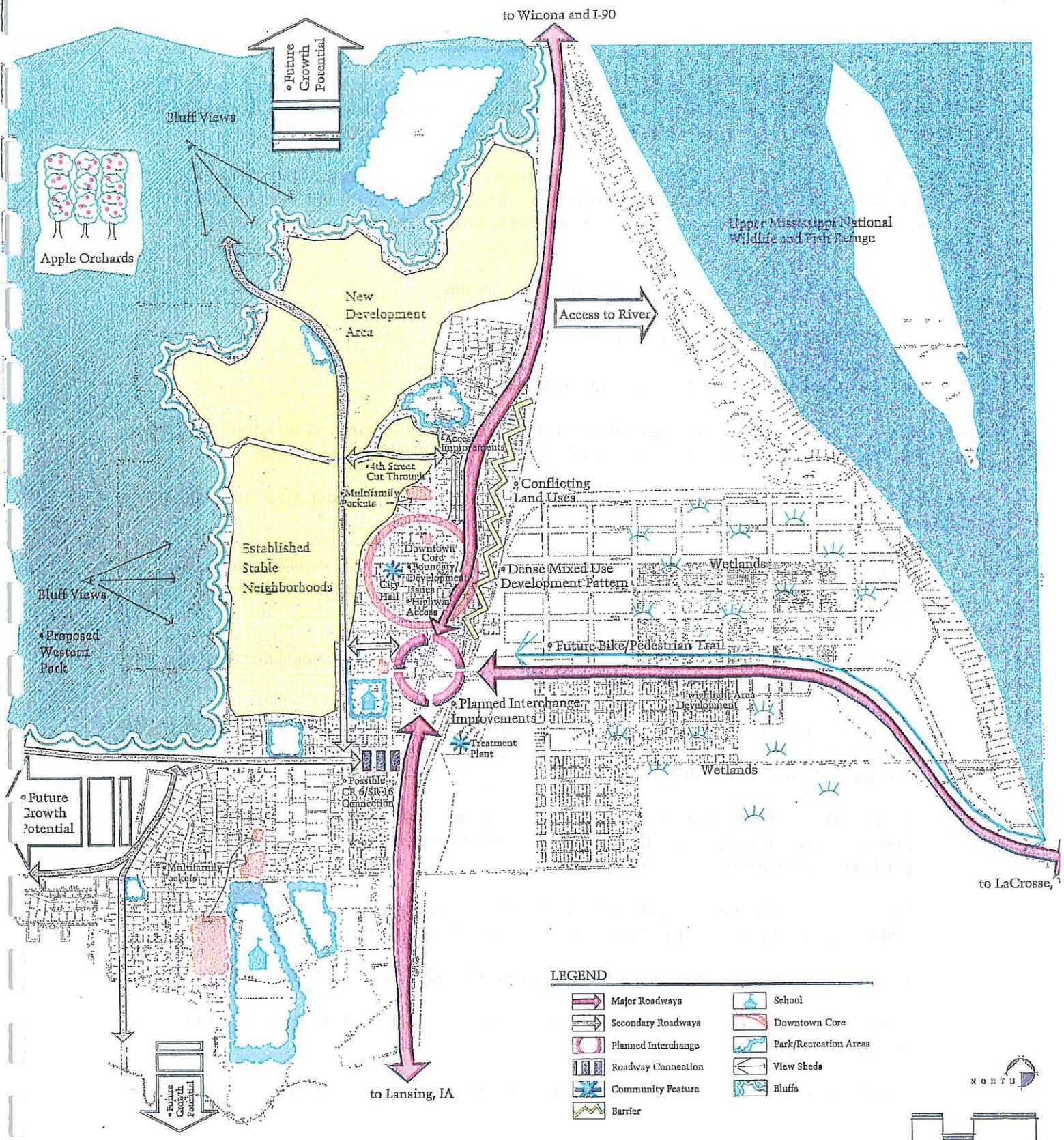
- Commercial real estate taxes
- Lack of benefits vs. costs of county and state government
- Inadequate commercial tax base
- Threat of lost opportunity
- Loss of orchards and natural beauty – no Applefest?!

#### Land Use/Infrastructure

- Businesses in residential areas
- Geographical limitations for growth -- river and bluff
- Limited expansion space, especially commercial
- Infrastructure problems
- Deteriorating infrastructure

#### **Other comments and suggestions made during the meeting in support of this vision:**

- Consider starting an economic development authority in La Crescent
- Consider hiring a full-time economic development director in La Crescent



**Opportunities and Constraints**  
**City of La Crescent, Minnesota**

## Existing Land Use

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The development pattern in and around La Crescent has been influenced by its proximity to La Crosse, transportation systems, the Mississippi River, and the bluffs. As development occurred, these natural and physical forces, political and private decisions, shaped the community to what it is today.

La Crescent has been termed as being a bedroom community to La Crosse. This is due in part to the large amount of developed land used for single family homes. The presence of bluffs and river bottom land also contribute to the scenic character of the area. These lands comprise almost one-half of the City's land area.

The purpose of evaluating existing land use patterns is to determine:

- Historic patterns of development
- Identify land use conflicts
- Provide a basis for establishing future land use scenarios

To identify land use patterns as they currently exist, field surveys and an analysis of aerial photography was used. The Existing Land Use map represents the land use patterns within La Crescent.

Listed below are the generalized land use categories used to define existing land uses within the community.

**Single-Family Residential** – This includes all single-family residential dwellings in existing and developing residential neighborhoods. Mobile homes are also included in this category. Single-family homes are the predominant character of La Crescent.

**Multi-Family Residential** – The multi-family residential category accommodates duplexes, four plexes, and multi-unit apartments.

**Commercial** – The commercial land use category provides for all general retail and service businesses. Commercial businesses are generally found in and adjacent to downtown, in the Twilite area, and along South Oak Street.

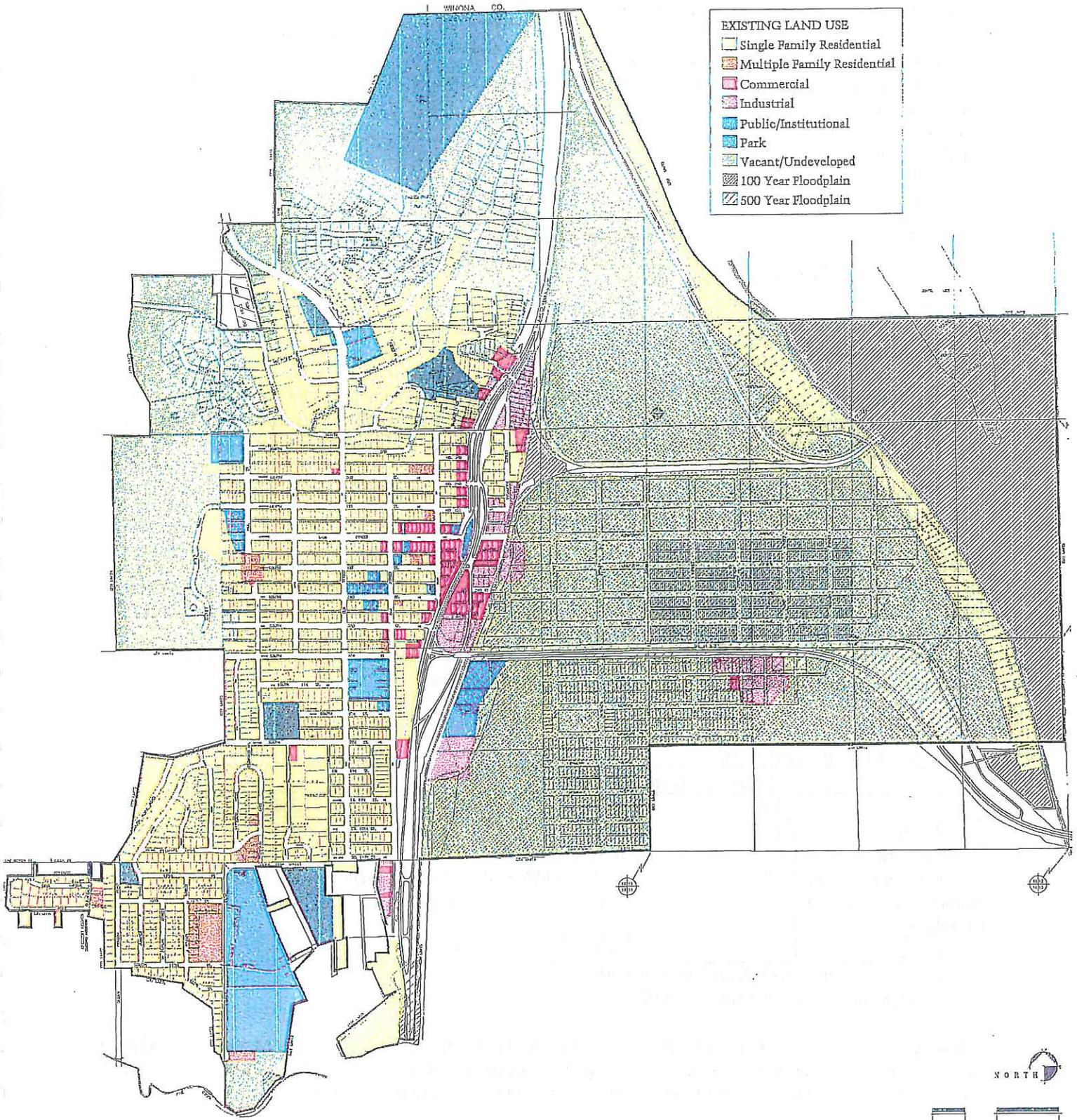
**Industrial** – The industrial category provides for manufacturing and assembly uses. Industrial businesses are scattered along the east side U.S. 14/61, in the Twilite area, and in the southern portion of the community along T.H. 26.

**Institutional** – These uses include schools, city government offices and garages, police and fire buildings, libraries, places of worship, cemeteries, and other quasi-public facilities.

**Park and Recreation** – Park and recreation lands include city owned park sites and facilities.

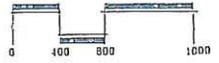
**Vacant/Open Space** – Vacant lands and open space include bluffs, marsh, and vacant developable land.

**ROW** – Right-of-way includes publicly dedicated lands for roadways and railroads.



**EXISTING LAND USE**

- Single Family Residential
- Multiple Family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Park
- Vacant/Undeveloped
- 100 Year Floodplain
- 500 Year Floodplain



Existing Land Use  
 City of La Crescent, Minnesota



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Table 11. Existing Land Use Inventory

Category	Acreage	Percent of Community
Single Family	413 acres	20 %
Multiple Family	15	1
Commercial	34	2
Industrial	30	3
Institutional	62	2
Park and Recreation	89	4
Vacant/Open Space	889	43
ROW	527	26
Totals	2059 acres	100.0 %

Source: Hoisington Koegler Group, 1997.

### Future Land Needs

As the community grows, additional land will be needed to accommodate the projected population increases. Due to the small amount of developable residential land within the community, growth will occur outside the current city boundary. These population increases will come in the form of:

- existing population inherited through annexation of developed township lands
- new residential development

The following table estimates the amount of land needed, in 10 year increments, to provide for increases in population. The calculations assume 10.6 persons per acre which is La Crescent's average residential density. These numbers should be considered as likely maximums. If new and/or infill residential development occurs at a higher density than exists today, less land would be needed for the projected population increases. Possible scenarios would include a development of multi-unit apartment complexes and townhomes that would off-set single-family home construction.

Table 12. Future Land Needs

	Residential Land Needs			
	1996	2000	2010	2020
Population	4557	5160	5882	6499
Persons/acre	10.6	10.6	10.6	10.6
Needed acres per decade to support population	428 acres	56.8 acres	68.1 additional acres	58.2 additional acres
Total acreage		56.8	124.9	183.1

Source: Office of the State Demographer, 1997

Hoisington Koegler Group, 1997.

Commercial and industrial land to serve population increases will be needed as well. Most of the existing areas however, are built-out. Future economic development opportunities could be sought through a combination of new lands, expansion of existing areas and redevelopment efforts.

## **Future Land Use Plan**

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Future land use patterns in La Crescent provide a support structure for the daily needs of those who live and work in the community. The compact size of the community acts both as an asset reinforcing its inherent character and an obstacle for future growth and development. Future land uses are grouped in areas where they act as complementary adjacent uses or perform a necessary role in the community. If the needs of the community change over time, the land use plan should allow for that change as long as the guiding principles are not compromised.

### **Concepts**

The future land use plan proposes that the natural river valley environment and the residential character remain dominant themes in the surrounding landscape. There is a large amount of bluff environment that limits development potential of the surrounding area. Available raw land is limited to the Pine Creek and north bluff areas which are identified as appropriate areas for new residential development. Although the remaining apple orchards may eventually give way to residential development pressures, apple orchards should continue to be an appropriate use for the north bluff. Commercial and industrial development is focused in areas that will require some redevelopment. Future growth and redevelopment of these areas present the most dramatic changes for the community in the years to come. Within the context of the future land use plan is the need to maintain a relationship to the surrounding physical and natural environments. Development must be sensitive to this relationship if community image is to be maintained. Some of the key concepts are listed below.

- New residential development is targeted in areas that allow for logical community growth.
- Creek, wetland, and bluff areas are protected by ensuring development is located in less sensitive areas.
- The downtown will be expanded with an orientation along Oak Street.
- The existing industrial areas will be redefined by transitioning out scattered commercial and residential uses.
- Multiple-family uses will be located close to the downtown and schools.

### **Future Land Use Categories**

The following land use categories describe the areas shown on the future land use plan map. The categories describe the types of use, their function, and relationship in the community.

**Bluff/Preservation** – The bluff/preservation category is characterized by steep wooded slopes of the Mississippi River Valley. Preservation areas include Minnesota and other islands shown within the Mississippi River channel. The natural state of these areas should be protected to maintain the character of the surrounding area.

**Rural/Agricultural** – The rural/agricultural category encompasses areas of upland bluff plateaus and low-lying valleys. Historically these areas have been used for crop production including corn, soybeans, and apples. Agriculture operations will continue to be vital to and influence the area well into the future. The Rural/Agricultural category is also appropriate for rural residential development on large estate lots or conservation subdivision design. The plan highly encourages the incorporation conservation subdivision design techniques to preserve significant amounts of open space and natural features. Preservation of these features, will help maintain the aesthetic qualities of these rural areas. Public utilities will not be extended to development in rural/agricultural areas.

**Single-Family Residential** – The single-family residential category accommodates one-family dwelling units that are the predominant land use throughout the community. As the community has grown, different patterns of residential development have emerged. The first established areas surrounding the downtown are characterized by a conventional grid pattern on small lots. This pattern continued as the community grew west and south until bluffs or low lying areas restricted growth. More recent development in the northern portions of the community are curvilinear designs on larger lots. All single-family residential areas would be served with typical city utility service including water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer facilities.

**Multiple-Family Residential** – The multiple-family residential land use category accommodates twinhome units, apartments, and assisted care living facilities. Multiple-family dwellings provide an opportunity for housing stock diversity to accommodate younger families and an aging population. Appropriate locations for these uses are in close proximity to downtown where commercial services are readily available and to schools and other public facilities.

**Commercial** – The commercial land use category provides for all general retail and service businesses that have a highway orientation. Commercial areas rely on a larger degree of visibility needed to attract passing traffic or are areas that are shopping destinations. On-site parking is an important consideration with these automobile oriented businesses.

**Central Business District** – The central business district is the hub of all activities in the community and as such accommodates a mix of uses. These uses are those which residents rely upon for their everyday needs. Uses include a wide variety of retail and service businesses, professional offices, and public facilities. A mix of residential uses including single family, two-family, and multiple family homes are vital to the downtown. This mix of housing types will allow life-cycle housing opportunities for residents wishing to have a close proximity to downtown businesses, services, civic functions, and transportation facilities. Because of the compactness of downtown, it has a pedestrian scale. Businesses here depend less on visibility and more on location. Parking is provided on street and in other public parking areas. Associated on-site parking may be provided but is located in the rear of the building.

**Industrial** – The industrial areas of the community include those uses that are involved in warehousing, machining, and production related activities. The future industrial areas along the highway rely on convenient access for shipping and receiving of materials and product. The existing industrial areas have a number of incompatible residential uses in close proximity. To create viable industrial areas, residential uses should transition to allow existing industry to expand and create new industrial sites for development.

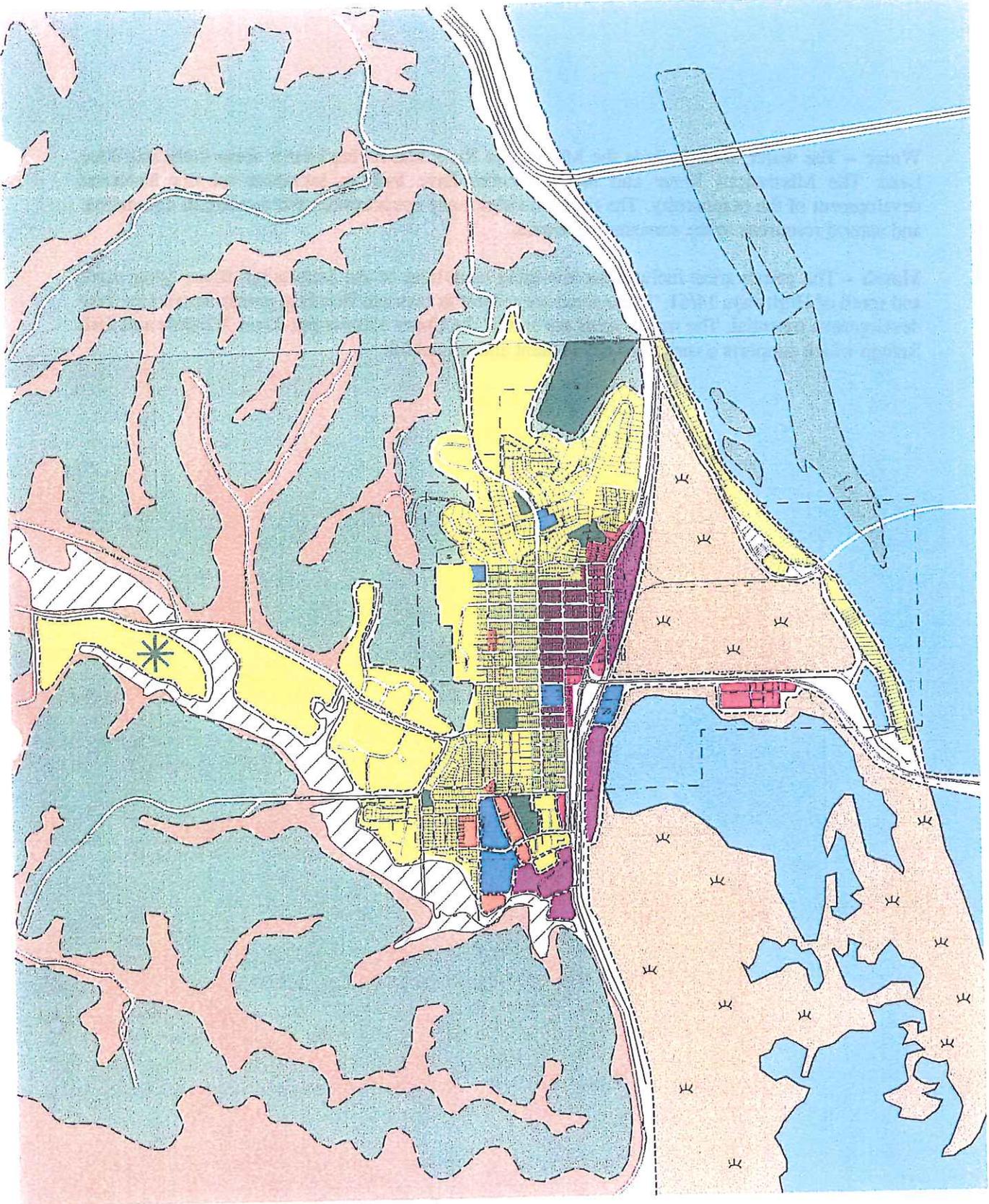
**Public/Institutional** – The public and institutional category consists of schools, government facilities, churches, cemeteries, and other quasi-public uses. These uses are interspersed throughout the community to serve residential areas. As the community grows, new schools and other public facilities should maintain a close proximity to the residential population base.

**Park and Recreation** – The park and recreation category includes areas for parks, play fields, trail systems, and recreation centers. The city has a number of park and recreation facilities that serve adjacent residential and community needs.

**Conservation** – The conservation category includes environmentally sensitive low-lying lands that are prone to seasonal flooding. This conservation area covers portions of the Pine Creek basin and its tributaries. Non-intensive activities such as agriculture and open spaces are intended for this category. Development in this area is not recommended due to poor soils and drainage.

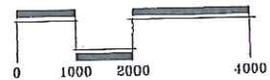
Water – The water areas include the Mississippi River and its backwater areas including Blue Lake. The Mississippi River and its backwaters have had an influence on the historical development of the community. The river provides many opportunities for recreation, commerce, and natural resources to the surrounding region.

Marsh – The marsh areas include the low-lying backwater of the Mississippi River lying north and south of Highways 14/61. These areas are subject to seasonal flooding greatly restricting their development potential. The marsh areas are part of the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge which supports a variety of native plant and animal life.



**LEGEND**

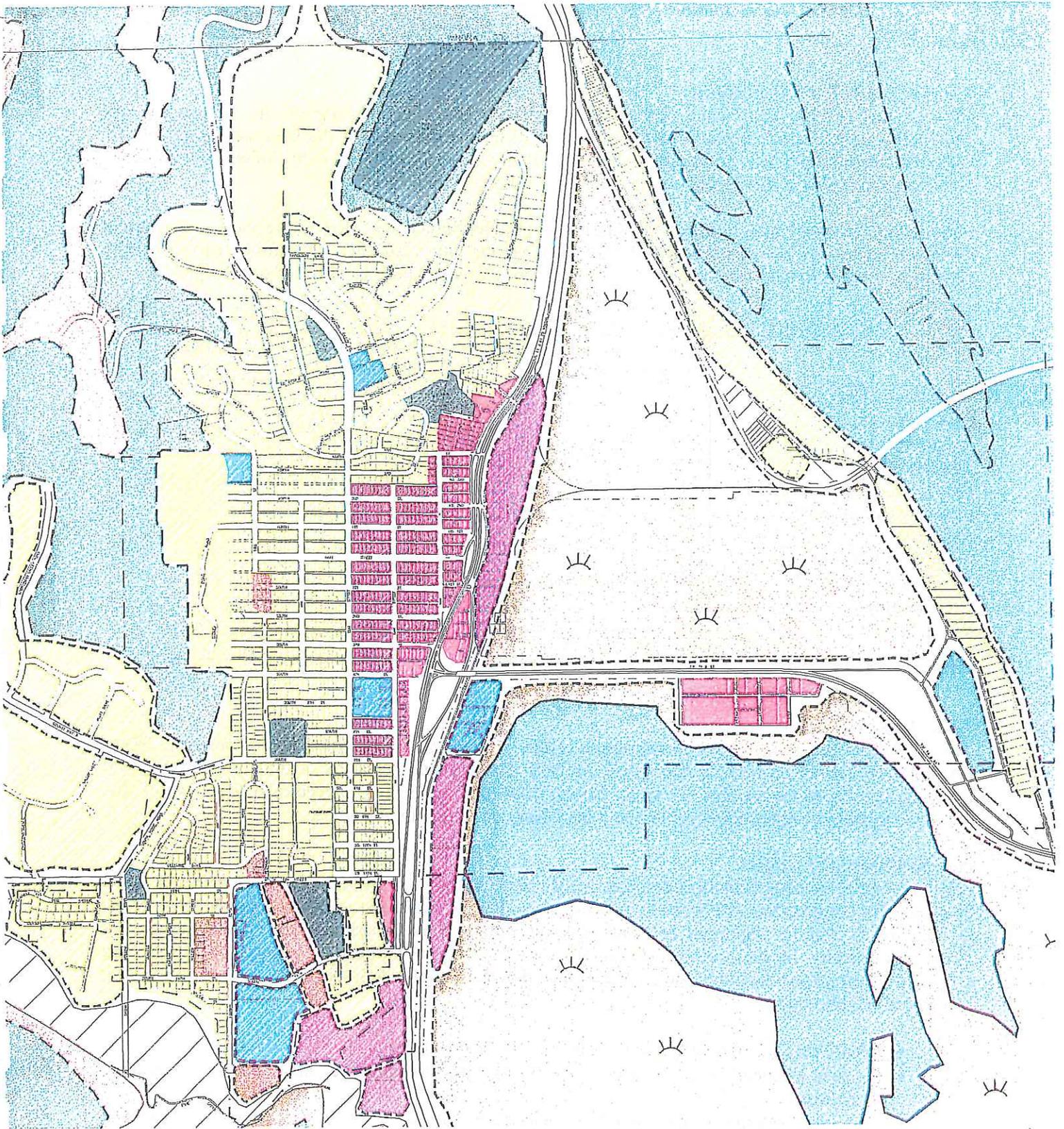
- |                             |                     |                      |                         |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Bluff/Preservation          | CBD                 | Public/Institutional | * Future Park Locations |
| Rural/Agricultural          | Commercial          | Conservation         |                         |
| Single Family Residential   | Industrial          | Water                |                         |
| Multiple Family Residential | Park and Recreation | Marsh                |                         |



**Future Land Use Plan**

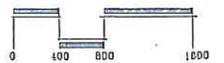


Holington Koehler Group Inc.



LEGEND

- |                             |                     |                      |                       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Bluff/Preservation          | CBD                 | Public/Institutional | Future Park Locations |
| Rural/Agricultural          | Commercial          | Conservation         |                       |
| Single Family Residential   | Industrial          | Water                |                       |
| Multiple Family Residential | Park and Recreation | Marsh                |                       |



Future Land Use Plan  
City of La Crescent, Minnesota



Hobington Koogler Group Inc.

111 North 2nd Street, Suite 104  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413  
(612) 333-6500

### Future Land Use Calculations

An inventory of the future land uses was calculated to show the makeup of the community and surrounding area. These numbers reflect the amount of land within each of the land use categories. Of note, the existing land use calculations were only taken for land within the City limits. Future single-family land use reflects developed and undeveloped land outside the City limits.

Future multiple-family and industrial land uses have doubled in acreage. Downtown and the downtown residential areas also reflect an expanded size. Although the future park and recreation area reflects the existing land use acreage, additional park demand in future residential areas will need to be explored.

Table 13. Future Land Use Calculations

Category	Future Land Use Acreage (Planning Area)	Existing Land Use Acreage (Within the City)
Bluff/Preservation	5132	
Rural/Agricultural	1832	
Single-Family	1015	413
Multiple-Family	27	15
Central Business District	51	
Highway Commercial	34	34
Industrial	77	30
Public/Institutional	62	62
Park and Recreation	89 (+ add'l parks with new dev.)	89
Conservation	305	
Water/Marsh	4693	
Totals	13,317 acres	

### Land Use Strategies

The following are strategies for development within similar use areas within the community. These principles attempt to provide the framework for how different land use areas of the community should properly function to ensure they are viable assets. Each land use area is a piece of a larger whole that needs to maintain a relationship to others or it is in danger of being unproductive.

### New Residential Strategies

New residential development includes both single and multiple family dwelling arrangements. Most single family construction will occur in outlying areas that are somewhat removed from the core of the community. It will be important to create a bond with new neighborhoods that communicates La Crescent's identity in their design. Other multiple family development is suggested around key community attractions including schools and the downtown. The following are strategies for new residential neighborhoods:

- Build neighborhood identity using the natural land features.
- Protect wooded areas, steep slopes and floodplains through proper site planning and building locations.
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections within a development and to adjacent developments and community facilities when possible.
- Allow conservation subdivision design and clustering techniques to preserve natural or significant features.
- Create neighborhood focal points such as parks or apple orchard preserves to invoke a sense of place.

### **Existing Residential Strategies**

The older established residential areas surrounding downtown have an inherent character that is different than the newly developed sections of the community. Older neighborhoods require additional attention to ensure the housing continues to provide for the needs of the community. The following are strategies for existing residential neighborhoods:

- Provide a broad range of housing opportunities.
- Allow higher density infill development in areas where appropriate buffering and protection to lower density housing can be provided.
- Recognize the changing housing needs of an aging population.

### **Highway Commercial Strategies**

Businesses with an orientation to the highway have a customer base that is largely dependent on automobile traffic. There are concerns about convenient available parking and proper storage areas for materials. It should be recognized that these businesses have specific needs for their operations. The following are strategies for highway commercial development.

- Provide commercial goods and services that serve the community and local market.
- Relocate those uses which are incompatible with Highway Commercial uses and accommodate them in other more appropriate areas of the community.
- Encourage consistency in building type, orientation, signage and other design features to promote attractive businesses that support investment of other businesses looking to be a permanent part of the community.
- Provide safe and accessible access to these locations.
- Locate a portion of off-street parking spaces in the sides and rear of the building.
- Buffer neighborhood uses from noise, views, and other negative influences of highway commercial development. Landscaping should be a preferred alternative to fences and walls that can deteriorate over time.

### **Downtown Strategies**

The downtown area has been the center of the community since it was established. To keep it as the focal point, traditional small town retail center design principles should be applied to maintain the relationships with the surrounding neighborhoods. The following are strategies for downtown development:

- Maintain the downtown as the social and retail hub of the community.
- Provide diverse goods and services that serve the needs of the community.
- Maintain a pedestrian scale that is compact and walkable.
- Carefully orient buildings towards the street to maintain a downtown identity.
- Encourage building design that is of proper mass, scale, and design. Walls facing streets should have glass windows on a large portion of the façade.
- Develop public parking areas that can be used by all businesses in downtown.
- Encourage improvements that are pedestrian friendly such as sidewalks, street lighting, benches, and planter boxes.

### **Industrial Strategies**

Future industrial locations will be the result of expanded existing areas and redevelopment of existing residential and commercial areas. The need for convenient highway access and protection from conflict with residential areas are important to long term viability. Because of the limited amount of industrial lands, new uses and expansion of existing uses need to be carefully evaluated to protect the community's

interests. La Crescent should attempt to maximize the amount of jobs per square foot of real estate as proposals are considered. The following are strategies for industrial development:

- Provide opportunities for new industrial development, expansion of existing uses and redevelopment of non-industrial areas to expand employment opportunities and to serve existing and new businesses in the community.
- Improve the appearance of industrial areas to minimize the adverse impacts on the community's image and development potential.
- Focus on companies that will bring a commitment to the community that can provide jobs for people living in La Crescent.
- Require high quality structures that are permanent and are complemented with appropriate landscaping. All storage areas should be screened from roadways and adjacent uses.

### **Public Facility Strategies**

Public uses include city government facilities, community facilities, schools, churches, and cemeteries. The following are strategies for public facilities:

- Provide needed public facilities and services for existing and future residents
- Locate new facilities close to the population they are intended to serve.
- Build permanent aesthetically pleasing facilities the community can be proud of.
- Provide pedestrian connections that are accessible to all.

## Transportation

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The MN/DOT has placed the TH 14/61 bridge on the improvements list for upgrading. The project is scheduled for 2002-2004 timeframe although the final scope and schedule of the project is not yet finalized. The La Crosse Area Planning Agency is also interested in integrating a bike trail into the bridge as part of the regional bike and pedestrian plan. The current bridge accommodates two lanes of traffic and is too narrow for a bike or pedestrian trail to be safely added.

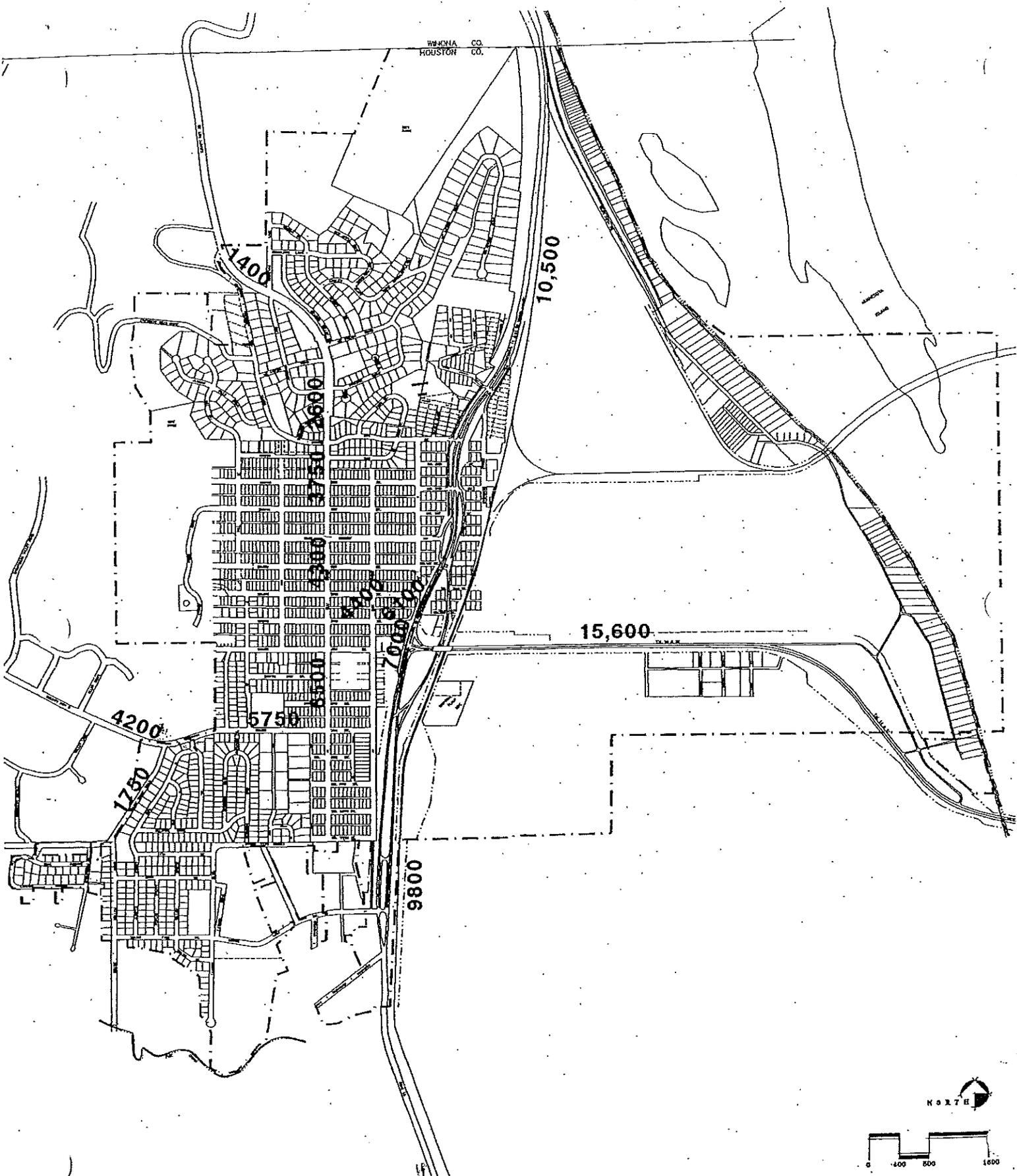
Other corridor issues along TH 14/61 include the South Walnut Street intersection with TH 14/61 and the number of access points to it through the community. The South Walnut Street intersection is a congested area for traffic coming from and going to La Crosse. The intersection is signalized but due to the lack of stacking on Walnut, traffic can back up onto the highway during peak hours. There are also a number of access points along the east and west sides of the highway in the northern portion of the community. The MN/DOT has expressed its interest in looking at an additional study of this corridor with the impending bridge project.

As development occurs along CR 6 traffic volumes will increase along South 7<sup>th</sup> Street, South Oak, and South Elm. The current movement routes vehicles from CR 6 and the southern portion of the community to South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to its connection with Walnut and TH 14/61. This places a large burden on the local street system which was not intended to carry this amount of traffic. Large trucks also use this route as well as taking Oak Street to the South 14<sup>th</sup> Street interchange to get to the highway.

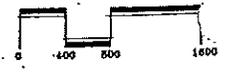
### Transportation Plan

The transportation plan promotes a safe and efficient movement of vehicles and people through the community on roadway and trail systems. A functional classification system categorizes roadways by the level of traffic they are designed to carry. The functional classification system is categorized as follows:

- Freeway – Divided two way multi-lane, high speed facilities with limited access. These are designed to move traffic on the regional scale. Freeways provide primary connections between major population centers and traffic destinations such as La Crosse and Rochester. Interstate 90 is the only freeway in the planning area.
- Major Arterials – Roadways connecting two or more communities with limited access control for optimum traffic flows and safety. These include TH 14, 16, and 61 which provide access within the city and connect to other communities.
- Minor Arterials – Minor arterials consist of major streets designed and intended to move traffic quickly, with low impedance to major arterials. These roadways provide good traffic movement at a local level. Minor arterials include CR 6, 25, 29, and CR 1 in Winona County.
- Collector – Collectors connect the higher volume arterial systems to the local streets and are intended to carry higher volumes of traffic than local streets. Collector streets include South 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Skunk Hollow Road, North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.
- Local – Local streets generally distribute the traffic from the collectors and arterials to individual properties. Local residential streets carry the least amount of traffic in the functional classification system.



WABASHA CO.  
HOUSTON CO.



**Traffic Counts - 1994 MnDOT data**  
City of La Crescent, Minnesota



H&K Engineering & Surveying, Inc.

201 North 4th Street, Suite 202  
La Crescent, Minnesota 55040  
(612) 438-1111

## Recommended Improvements

The replacement project of the TH 14/61 is a priority highway improvement project for the City. The City should continue to coordinate with MN/DOT to ensure this project serves the needs of the community and region. Additional improvements to highway access along the downtown area should be considered as a part of a corridor study. The transportation plan shows access points to the community at locations where the highway is divided. They include Hillview Blvd., North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Main Street, South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, South 7<sup>th</sup> Street/CR 6, and South 14<sup>th</sup> Street. These interchange locations should ensure existing street networks and land uses are appropriate with the transportation demands. Existing access points at North 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Main Street that could be closed will need careful attention with any highway improvement project, to prevent access and location concerns for existing homes and businesses. A frontage road along the west side of TH 61 from Hillview Blvd. to Main Street will help with local circulation patterns. The land use plan anticipates this frontage road would serve the commercial businesses oriented towards the highway. Future highway improvements will need to consider these land use and access issues.

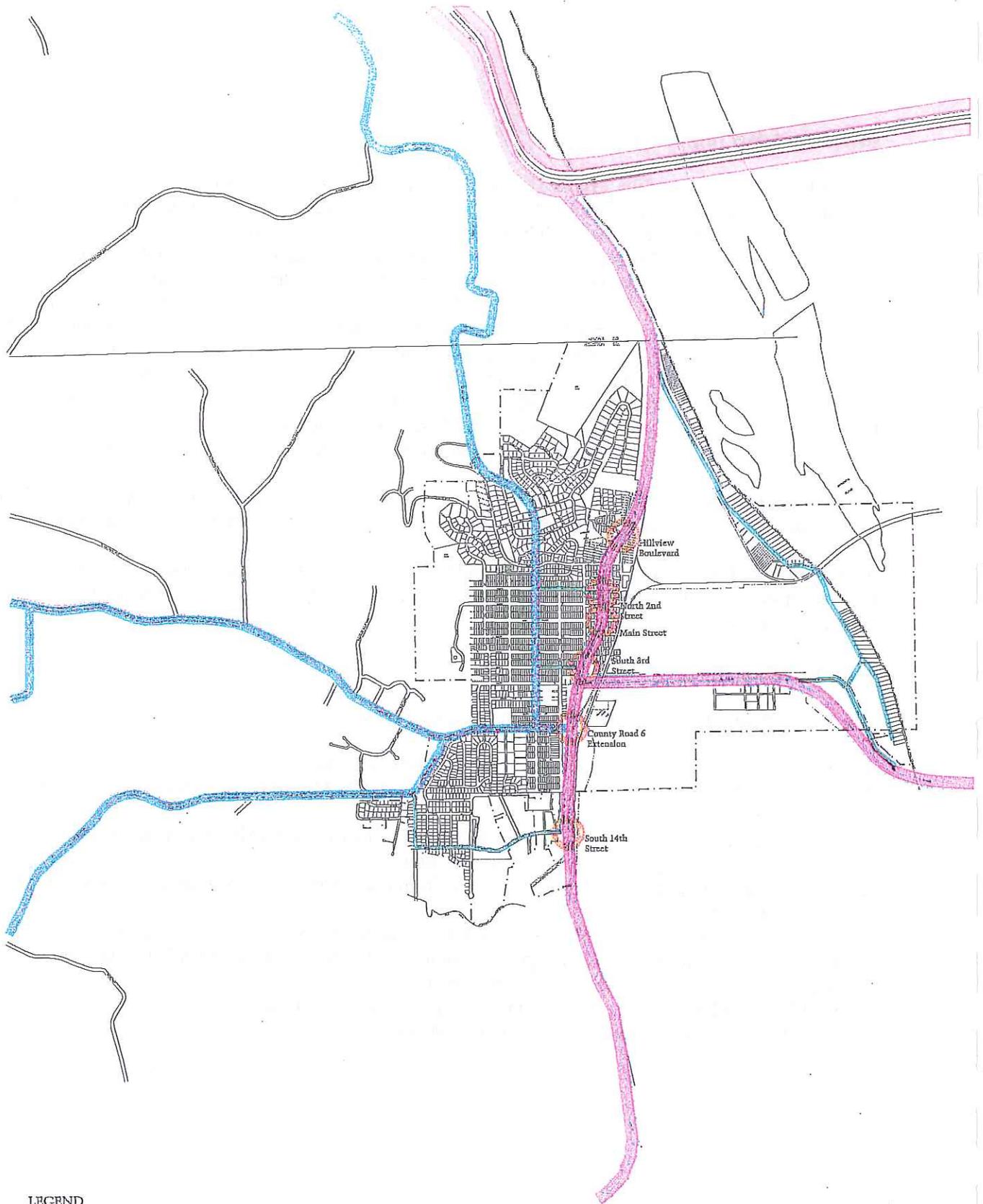
An additional study should be taken to ensure that Chestnut Street can function properly as a frontage road. Needs include providing adequate stacking from exiting highway traffic and parking issues.

An extension of CR 6 to TH 16 should be considered as a future improvement to shift the burden from the local street system. This extension should also be coordinated with the County and MN/DOT as a part of an overall corridor improvement project.

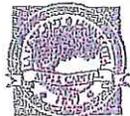
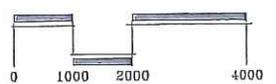
## Transportation Policies

The following are the City's Transportation Policies:

1. Adopt MPO plans when they meet the needs of the community.
2. Coordinate the TH 14/61 bridge improvement project with MN/DOT, Houston County, and La Crosse Area Planning Agency.
3. Improve access and safety along the TH 14/61/16 corridor by promoting better roadway design.
4. Limit new direct property access from arterial streets.
5. Properly detach frontage roads and driveways from major street intersections to increase safety and vehicle stacking.
6. Encourage the use of alternative travel modes such as pedestrian, bicycle, and transit.
7. Participate in regional mobility programs coordinated by the La Crosse Area Planning Committee to improve access to La Crescent and the region at large.
8. Build bike and pedestrian paths as an integral part of new street and highway projects.
9. Provide sidewalks as necessary to insure pedestrian safety.



- LEGEND**
- Freeway
  - Major Arterial
  - Minor Arterial
  - Collector
  - Interchange



**Transportation Plan**  
**City of La Crescent, Minnesota**



Holsington Koegler Group Inc.

123 North 2nd Street, Suite 100  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401  
 612.531.4223

## Utilities

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The City of La Crescent owns and operates its own public utilities system that provides water, sanitary sewer, and limited storm sewer services to its residents. Public water and sanitary sewer services provide residents with a safe and reliable source of potable water and discharge means that protects public health and reinforces quality of life. Currently, sanitary sewer service is limited within the City and studies are currently underway to evaluate means to extend the existing system to those areas not currently served.

### Existing Water System

The City owns and operates the only potable water treatment and supply facility in La Crescent Township. Areas outside the city limits depend on private wells for service. As the City has grown, water service has been extended to these areas. The four main components of the water system are:

- Water Source/Supply
- Treatment
- Storage
- Distribution

La Crescent's water supply is from 3 wells. They are located in Pleasant View Park, Stoney Point Road and at the corner of South 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Larch Avenue. Water from these wells is treated to meet EPA standards before it is pumped to the two above ground reservoir tanks. The largest reservoir tank, adjacent to well #4, holds 800,000 gallons. The second reservoir tank has a 500,000 gallon capacity and is located along Crescent Hills Drive. To keep up with water demands, the reservoir tanks are filled during the evening hours when usage is generally lower so the tanks are full during peak hours during the day. Extending outward from the reservoirs are a series of distribution lines to serve individual residents, business, and fire hydrants for fire fighting purposes. Current average daily demand is 504,000 gallons/day. The maximum daily demand is 1,080,000 gallons/day which is currently less the total system storage capacity of 1,300,000 gallons.

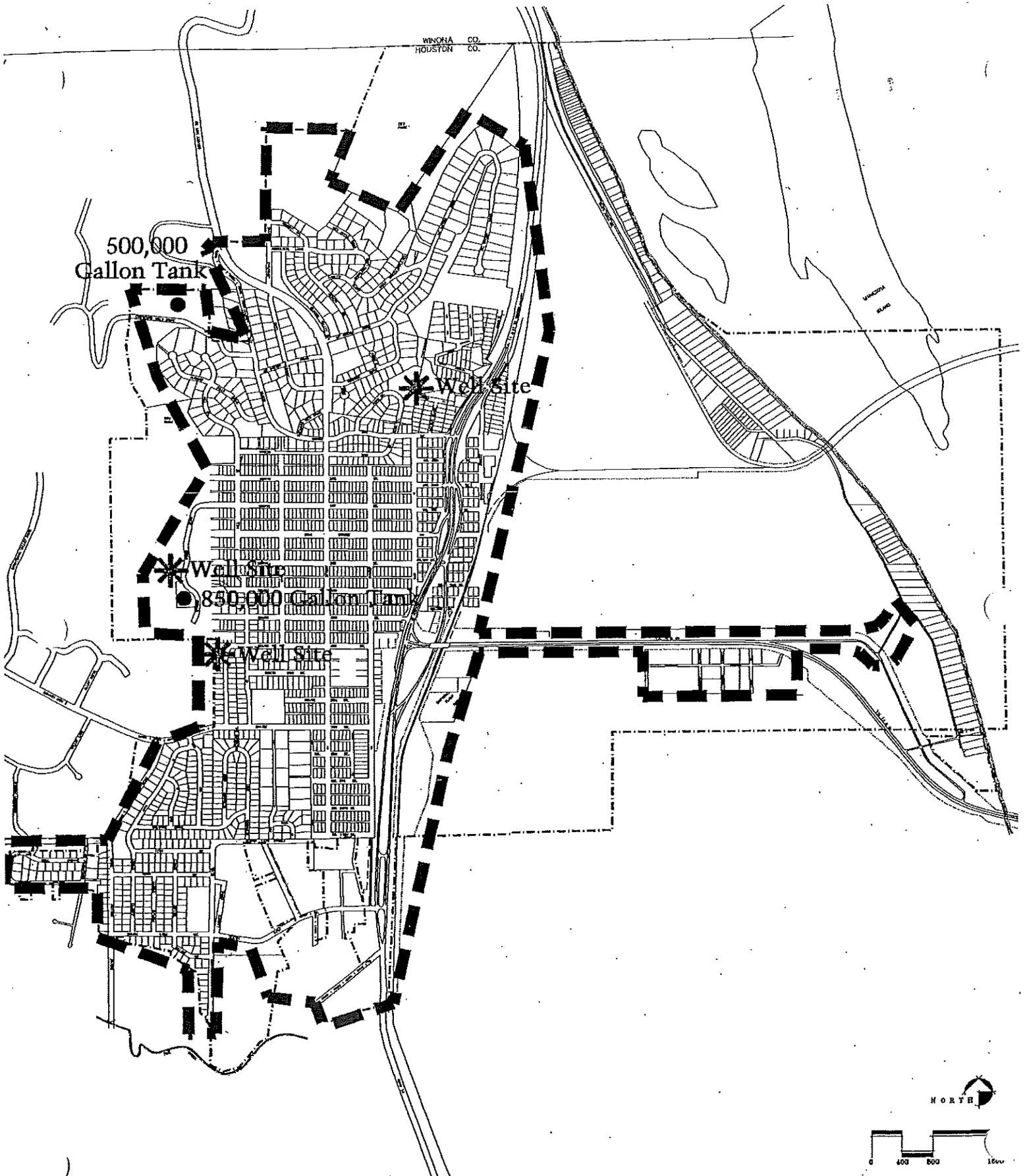
### Existing Sanitary Sewer System

The Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) uses mechanical treatment processes to treat the City's waste water. The WWTP is located on Chestnut Street just south of T.H. 14 & 61. The WWTP currently operates at half of its capacity on an average demand day treating 300,000 gallons of wastewater. The plant has a capacity of 626,000 gallons/day which is also the peak demand.

### Existing Storm Sewer System

Surface water drains from the bluffs through La Crescent to the Mississippi River. The existing storm sewer system is in place to collect and channel this water from developed areas with little or no storage capacity to natural drainage courses. Approximately one-half of La Crescent is currently served by the storm sewer facilities.

The City recently considered but did not approve a Storm Water Utility which could create a mechanism for funding storm sewer and other public improvement projects. The utility would allow the City to create a fund to pool monies from various sources to be used to pay for projects. Because of the number of established neighborhoods without storm water facilities, a mechanism to provide the necessary funding to retrofit these areas would be a great benefit to the community. Various options exist to fund the utility and the City should explore all that are available.



WINONA CO.  
HOUSTON CO.

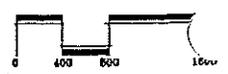
500,000  
Gallon Tank

\* Well Site

\* Well Site

850,000 Gallon Tank

\* Well Site

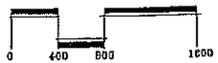
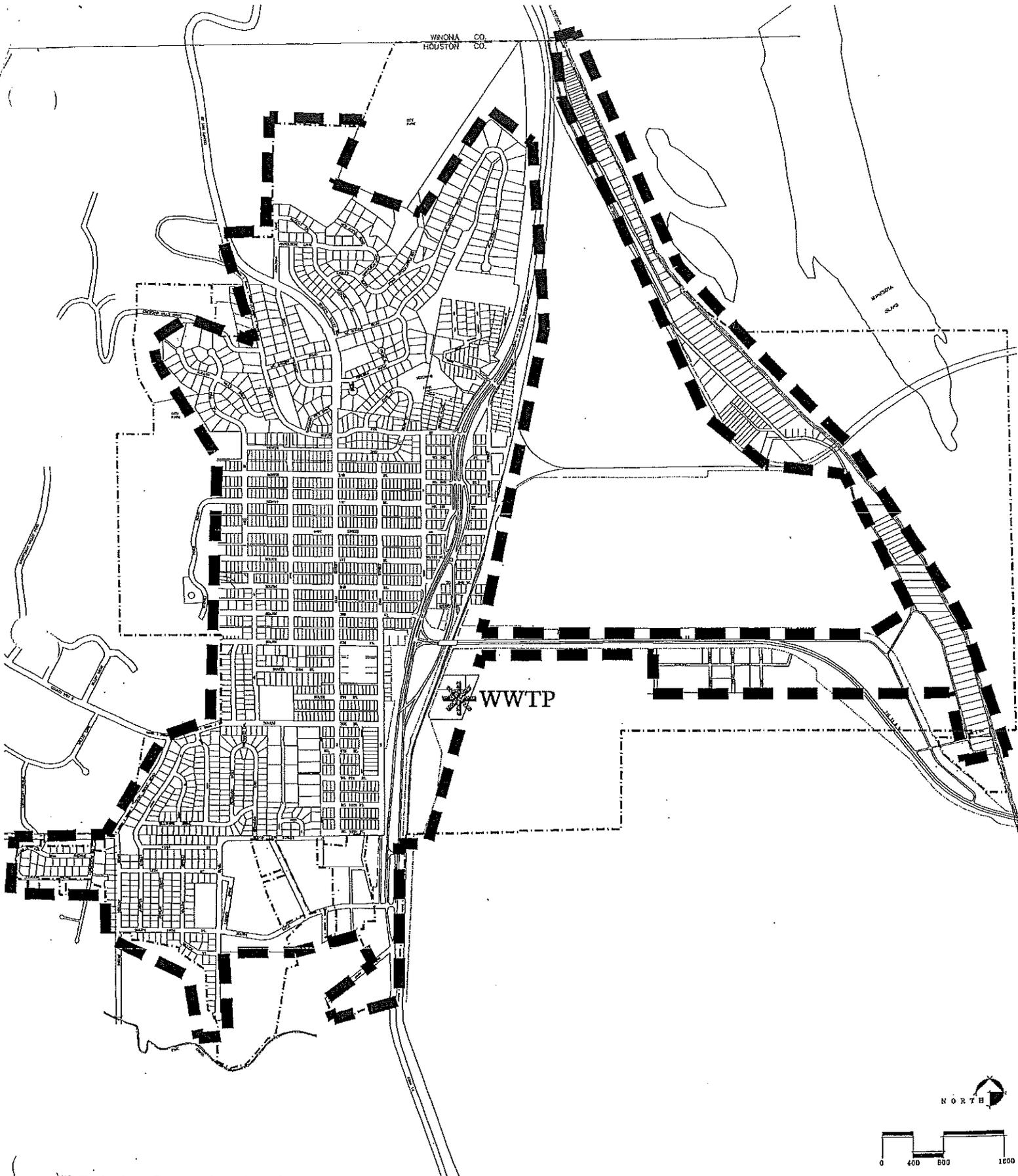


Existing Water Service Areas  
City of La Crescent, Minnesota



Hedberg Knapp Group Inc.

1011 Market Street, Suite 200  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102  
(612) 224-2200



Existing Sewer Service Areas  
 City of La Crescent, Minnesota



Hickington Koepfer Group Inc.

131 Beach and Ocean, Suite 120  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402  
 P. 612.333.1000

## **Water System Plan**

Future population indicators anticipate the population will grow about 30% through the year 2020. This coupled with the desire for additional business and industrial growth will place demands on the City's water system. Although the system's capacity will accommodate additional demands, they should be closely monitored so appropriate measures can be implemented to keep pace with demand. Development has been planned for in the water system with the addition of the 500,000 gallon water reservoir. Further study will need to be taken to better understand the economic as well as natural resource implications of providing or not providing public water service to areas not currently served. The Pine Creek area will also need to be evaluated to better understand its needs. As the City does not currently provide water service to this area, retrofitting private service with public water service will be a challenge.

To avoid potential water quality issues with individual wells, the City should continue to review the policy that annexation require hook-up to City water and vice-versa. This policy will continue to ensure that public health is protected by providing residents with a safe potable water supply.

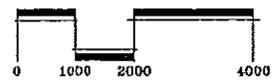
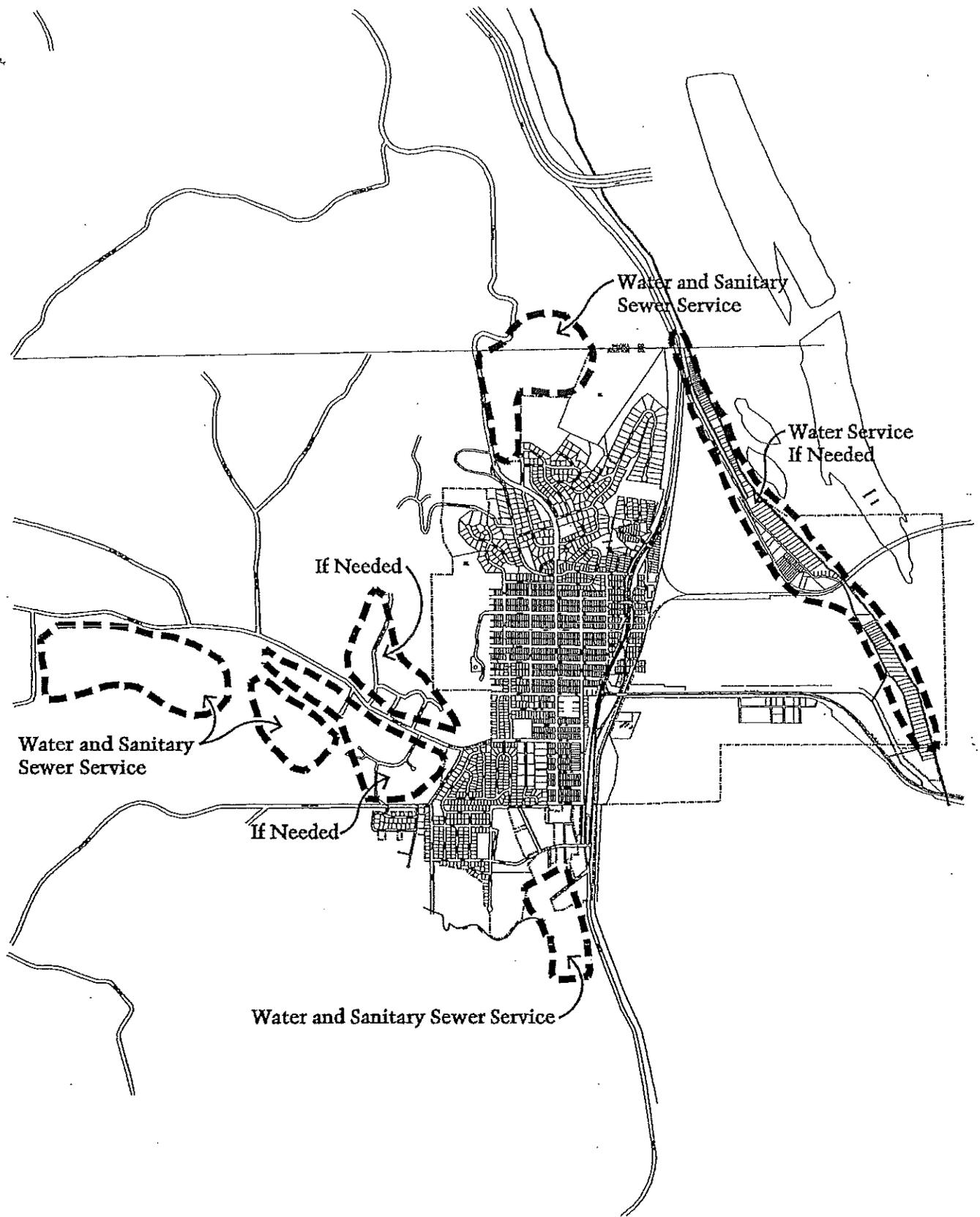
## **Sanitary Sewer Plan**

The sanitary sewer system will need to expand to serve a growing La Crescent population. The plan advocates that if residential development occurs in the Pine Creek Valley, sanitary sewer facilities should be installed. City policy should require that all new development be required to hook-up to public sanitary sewer facilities.

Existing development in the Pine Creek area which is served by individual on-site septic systems may eventually need public sanitary sewer. Many of these homes are located on large rural lots an acre or more in size. Some of these lots have the potential to be subdivided into smaller lots more closely resembling the size of a typical city lot. When this occurs, on-site septic systems become problematic because of the area needed for leeching fields and adequate buffer between adjacent systems. If these areas are incorporated into the City, public sanitary sewer may be needed at some time in the future. Although it may be many years before this occurs, it is prudent to incorporate these areas in system design.

## **Storm Sewer Plan**

Correcting the existing deficiencies in the storm sewer system should be a priority of the City. All new development should be required to provide storm sewer facilities that will help control water run-off. Existing developed areas of the City should be evaluated as needed to determine if improvements are necessary. Storm water control facilities have been built along North Elm Street. Similarly, the new development in the Pine Creek Valley will also need storm sewer facilities to control run-off into Pine Creek. Further study of large lot residential development located along County Road 6 should be performed if these properties are annexed to determine storm sewer needs.



**Utility Expansion Areas**  
**City of La Crescent, Minnesota**



Hickington Keegler Group Inc.

222 Third, East Street, Suite 100  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401  
 612.926.8999

## **Housing**

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The diversity of housing in La Crescent has provided for the needs of its residents over time. This is seen in the range of single-family, multi-family, mobile homes, and assisted care living accommodations throughout the community. The mix of housing in the community is dominated by single-family residential homes. Although the current housing mix is largely made up of single-family homes, national and local trends in demographics and market demand indicate that a greater diversity of housing types is needed. As the baby boom generation of La Crescent ages and lifestyles change, so will the demand for apartments, condominiums, and senior housing.

### **Housing Plan**

The City should continue to strive to provide a balanced mix of housing that meets the needs of current residents and anticipates future needs. A well balanced housing stock not only provides all residents with living options, but also stabilizes it to minimize the impact of economic swings.

In older neighborhoods, efforts should be made at improving the quality and appearance of homes that are in need of attention, allowing for the quality of the entire neighborhood to be elevated to a degree more in line with its original character. Remodeling and infill housing should reflect the predominant character of the surrounding neighborhood. Attention to detail in these established neighborhoods should be a priority to preserve their inherent character. Conflicts in land use and intrusion of nearby uses pose the greatest problem in established neighborhoods than in more recently developed neighborhoods. Therefore, more significant actions may be required to protect these areas from degradation due to negative influences of adjacent or nearby uses.

The land use plan has identified existing housing areas adjacent to and interspersed within areas planned for industrial redevelopment. As identified in the guiding principles and residents vision, the community encourages strong neighborhoods that are safe and attractive. These small residential pockets often are overrun by industrial traffic which share the same streets, odors, dust, and noise. As these areas transition to industry, residents will need to move elsewhere. Existing or new housing stock in the community could provide for their living needs. Measures should be addressed for housing needs that may arise.

Newly developing residential neighborhoods are largely single-family homes. Traditional single family detached housing has always been a strong component of the community's housing stock. It is anticipated that regional market forces will be favorable to this housing type into the near future. Demands placed on housing by an aging population will require additional variety in single family attached units. Advances in medical delivery are allowing elderly who need care to remain at home for many more years of their lives. This dynamic places a greater demand on the housing stock by necessitating flexibility and choice exist to fit a variety of living situations. Housing types that accommodate an aging population include twinhomes, condominiums (single-story), apartments with improvements for accessibility, and senior housing complexes.

### **Housing Policies:**

The following are the City's housing policies:

1. Maintain a balanced housing supply with housing available for people at all income levels and unit types that meet the life-cycle needs of La Crescent.
2. Promote ongoing maintenance of owner occupied and rental housing units.

3. Recognize the character of the neighborhood when rehabilitating existing homes or building new ones.
4. Encourage rehabilitation of existing housing stock over new construction when possible.
5. Provide maintenance or improvement assistance to elderly homeowners who are not capable of caring for their homes but are still self-sufficient.
6. Maintain zoning and subdivision regulations that allow for a wide range of housing types.
7. Encourage higher density housing around the downtown, public facilities, and other locations that provide necessary daily services and needs.
8. Require the integration of open spaces within residential developments in order to maintain a living environment that is consistent with the City's vision and guiding principles.

## Downtown

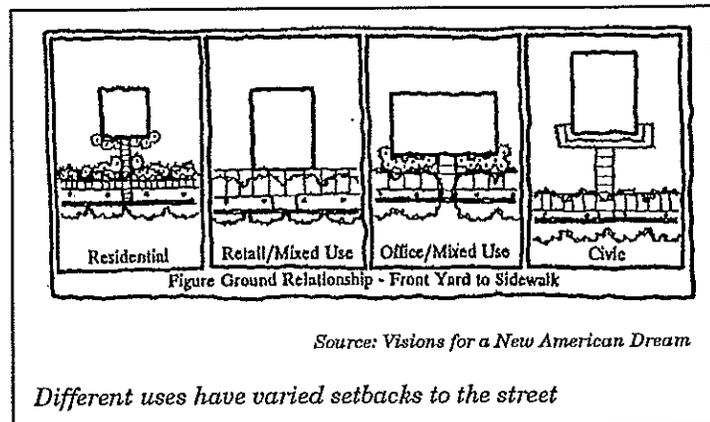
Downtown La Crescent is the core of commercial and community activities. Aside from the few commercial businesses scattered along the highway corridor, downtown is the center for retail trade and services. Future growth of the downtown is, however, constrained by surrounding residential neighborhoods. The few remaining vacant lots in the downtown will soon be developed. New boundaries will need to be designated for the continued health of the downtown and its ability to provide needed services to the community.

### Downtown Plan

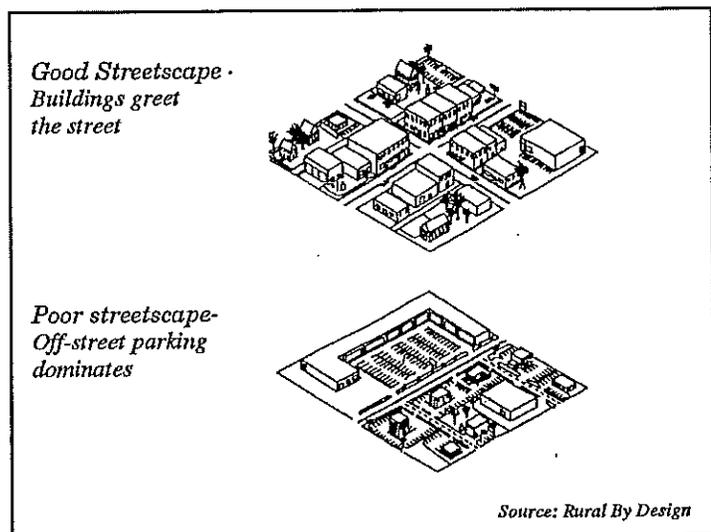
Downtown La Crescent has experienced a solid pace of activity in recent years. A number of new businesses have located in the central business district and some have constructed new buildings to accommodate their operations. This is reflective of the good economic times that are indicative of the late 1990s. With this growth comes change to the fabric of downtown. It will be important to consider the physical, economic, and social aspects and relationships this change brings.

Capturing and linking opportunities of private and public investment will ensure the goal of promoting the downtown as a hub of the community is achieved. A successful downtown La Crescent will incorporate many interrelated elements to make it work.

- **A mix of uses** – To provide diversity of uses which draw people throughout the day and evening. An economically healthy downtown La Crescent will continue to have a mix of uses including office, retail, dining, public, and entertainment functions. Each of these components contribute to an attractive mix that creates a market that is balanced. Over concentrations of a single activity will defeat a balanced community focus.



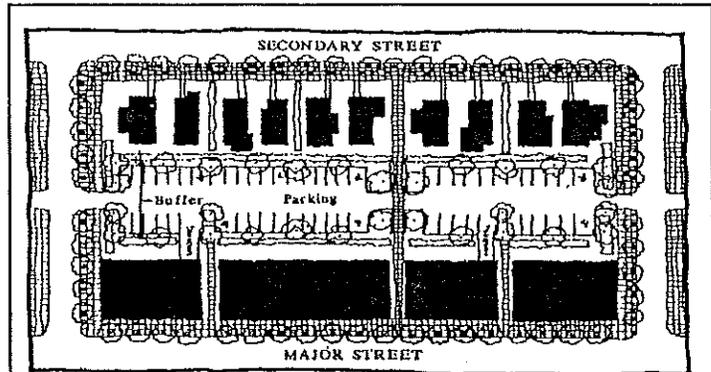
- **Public spaces** – Special events and activities such as the Apple Festival are important to creating attraction to downtown. A festive and lively social atmosphere are essential to this festival and could be replicated during other times of the year. As the downtown grows, public gathering places should be incorporated into its fabric and used for festivals and other attractions.
- **Scale** – Downtown La Crescent has a compact physical structure and arrangement that will encourage pedestrian activity and economic vitality. The compactness will help



develop spatial relationships of future growth.

- **Connections** – Linkages between downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods bring residents to the downtown. These connections should be maintained and enhanced as the downtown grows.
- **Identity** – A positive image of the downtown also play a critical role in its vitality. Entry features which define the edge of downtown create a sense of identity in unifying it as a destination.

Once entering downtown, people should feel as if they have arrived in a special place. A place that is uniquely La Crescent and different than others. Creating visual order through patterns and identity elements organize the downtown to create this sense of place.



*Source: Visions for a New American Dream*  
*Downtown must maintain a relationship to the surrounding residential neighborhood*

## **Park and Recreation**

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A healthy park and recreation system is an important element of a developing community like La Crescent. They enhance residential neighborhood character, protect natural resources, and provide opportunities for recreational activities. La Crescent has a natural setting for recreational activities with the surrounding river valley environment as its playground. Many forms of recreation are available within the surrounding areas for residents to enjoy. The recently completed park and recreation plan provides plans for community facilities.

### **Park and Recreation Plan**

The City's existing Park and Recreation Plan which was adopted in 1993, provides a solid framework for the City's park systems. This plan should work in concert with the Comprehensive Plan and be revised as needed to reflect changing conditions of the community. As new residential development occurs in the Pine Creek Valley and the north bluff, additional parkland will be needed to meet residents needs.

The Comprehensive Plan also promotes connections of City facilities to regional systems. The La Crosse Area Long Range Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan includes La Crescent in planning for these systems. The Plan supports a number of bicycle, pedestrian and multi-use trails to better connect the region using La Crosse as the major hub of the system. Within the plan are 5 objectives identified for bicycle and pedestrian movement.

- Objective 1: Organize a Bicycle/Pedestrian Program
- Objective 2: Plan and Construct Needed Facilities
- Objective 3: Promote Bicycling and Walking
- Objective 4: Educate Bicyclists, Pedestrians and the Public
- Objective 5: Enforce Laws and Regulations

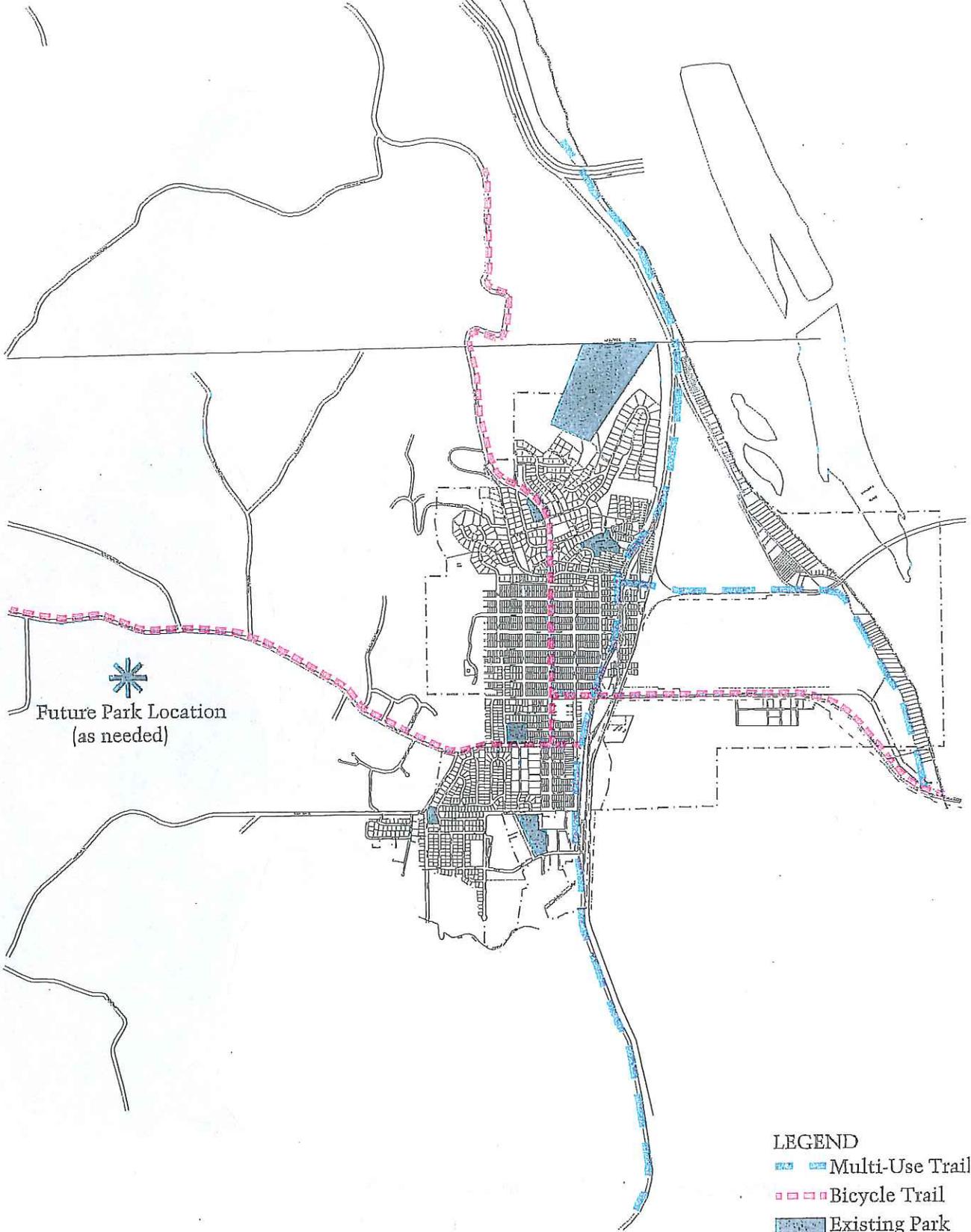
The plan also establishes a list of 5 regional projects where planning efforts will be focused. Priority number 2 is a bicycle trail to connect La Crosse to La Crescent. As shown on the Future Park and Trail System Map, the plan supports bicycle and multi-use trails. Bicycle trails shown on the map would be designed as a paved shoulder 4 feet in width along an existing roadway. Multi-use trails would be designed to separate automobile traffic from pedestrians with a 10 foot trail width and paved. The replacement of the highway 14/61 bridge is the key link La Crescent needs to access the regional system. Continued coordination with the La Crosse Area Planning and MN/DOT will be needed to ensure the City's place in this system is secured.

### **Goal:**

Establish a link between the City's park and recreation systems and regional facilities.

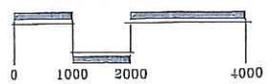
### **Policies:**

1. Provide a balanced park system which includes neighborhood parks, community parks, special use facilities and schools, all interconnected by a trail network.
2. Provide open space areas which assist in the conservation and protection of ecologically sensitive areas.
3. Continue to improve and upgrade the La Crescent park system to keep pace with the changing needs of the community's population.
4. Establish a local park system with linkages to existing and proposed area-wide recreational facilities and La Crescent's natural surroundings including the Mississippi River and the bluff areas.



  
 Future Park Location  
 (as needed)

- LEGEND**
-   Multi-Use Trail
  -   Bicycle Trail
  -  Existing Park Facilities

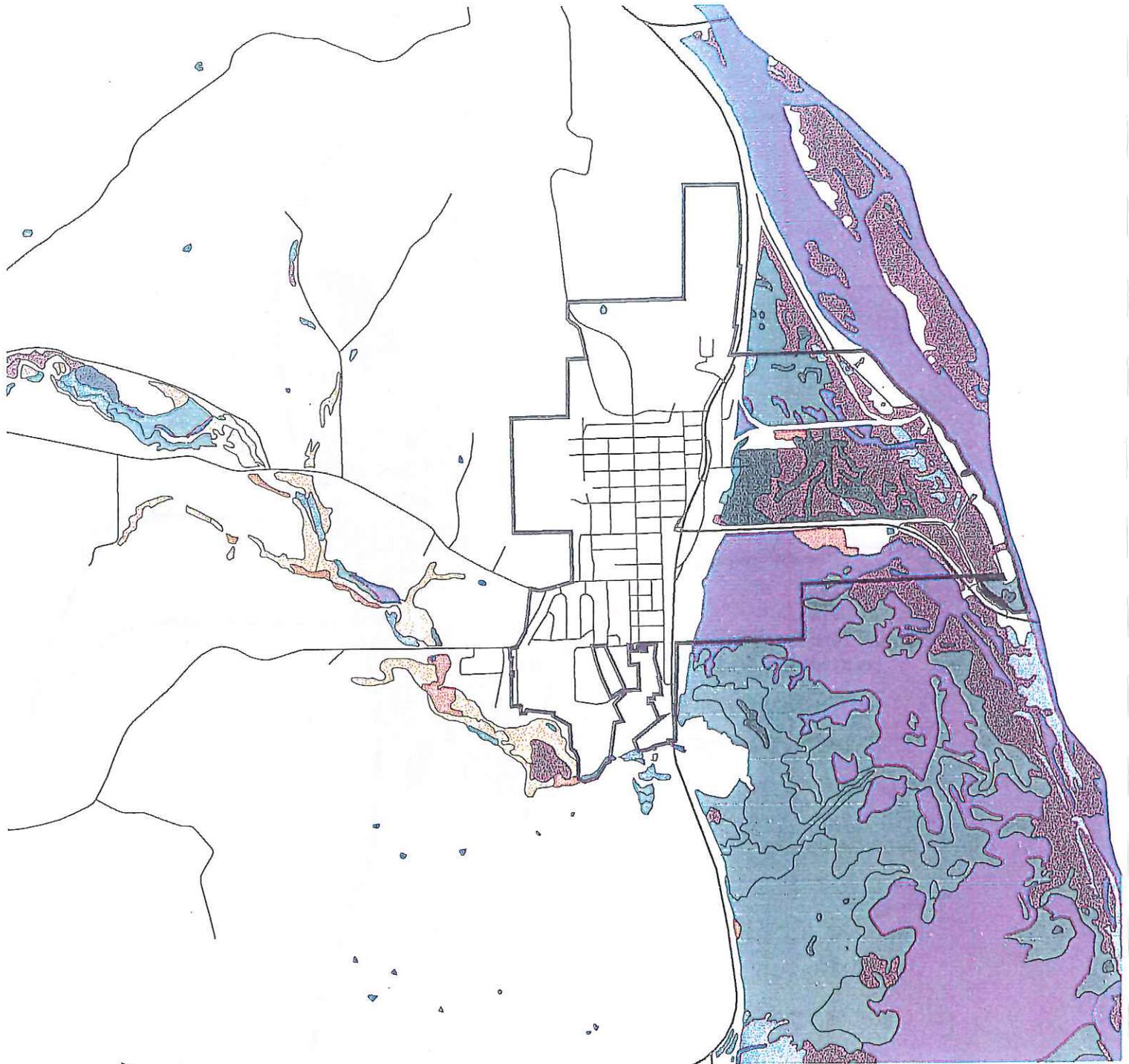


Future Park and Trail System  
 City of La Crescent, Minnesota



Hoisington Koepler Group II

325 North 3rd Street, Suite  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401  
 612.338.0100



National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) - Circa 39 wetlands

- |                                   |                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Upland                            | Type 4 - Deep Marsh         |
| Type 1 - Seasonally Flooded Basin | Type 5 - Shallow Open Water |
| Type 2 - Wet Meadow               | Type 6 - Shrub Swamp        |
| Type 3 - Shallow Marsh            | Type 7 - Wooded Swamp       |



400 0 400 800 1200 Feet



Wetlands  
 City of La Crescent, Minnesota



Hoisington Koegler Group Inc.  
 123 North Third Street, Suite 100  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

## Community Image

La Crescent has a strong sense of community pride and spirit that is based in the people's relationship with the land. The apple industry has long been part of the community's heritage and ongoing growth. As the community continues to develop, a connection between the past and the future should be bridged to maintain the community's identity. Establishing a link from the past to the future will ensure the identity of the community will remain uniquely that of La Crescent.

### Goals:

1. Strengthen the image and identity of La Crescent.
2. Incorporate elements of community heritage in streetscapes, public spaces and the downtown.

### Policies:

1. Coordinate development with La Crescent Township and Winona County to ensure elements of the landscape are incorporated into subdivision design.
2. Encourage a high level of design and aesthetics in all road projects.
3. Identify key elements of community image and represent them throughout the City.
4. Identify corridors and key entry points where elements of community image can be represented.
5. Discourage the intrusion of billboard signage along highway and major street corridors that cause visual clutter and would distract from the natural beauty of the area.
6. Promote quality development that is designed to last for generations.
7. Create an identifiable downtown that reflects community pride and heritage.
8. Continue to promote La Crescent as a quality place to live.



Source: *Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley: A Design Manual for Conservation and Development*  
*Conservation subdivision design can preserve important features of the natural landscape*

## **Implementation Strategies**

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A comprehensive planning effort is only as good as it's ability to guide and effect desired change. In order for it to be effective, it needs to be implemented. With implementation also comes the need for flexibility to react to changes. If change occurs that is beyond the framework and scope of the plan, the plan should be updated. This implementation plan offers strategies that can lead to positive change for the community that balances the unique resources and provide opportunities for new growth and redevelopment. In addition to specific land use strategies discussed earlier in the plan, the following topics discuss the ways to prepare the City for the future.

### **Growth Strategy**

The growth of La Crescent to date has been without limits. This is in part due to available raw land and the ability to relatively easily serve this land with necessary utilities. The northern area and Pine Creek Valley are identified as two areas for future residential growth. Although the City has generally been successful in annexing new lands, La Crescent and Dresbach Township does not appear to be receptive to these acquisitions. Ultimately, the landowner must decide whether the City or the Township will best serve their needs. Landowners wishing to subdivide property with utilities approach the City who can provide water and sewer facilities to best serve their needs. Property owners living on large lot developments without public improvements may find that their current situation is better served with Township jurisdiction. The needs of landowners can change for a number of reasons. Due to the complexity of issues that result, the City and Township must be prepared.

The City cannot rely alone on landowners willing to annex as a basis for promoting orderly growth. The City should work with the Township in planning for growth. The City and Township must be able to discuss this issue together in order to work toward a solution. Resolution of annexation issues will not happen in a few meetings. Rather it will require each party to first understand that any equitable solution is the result of a process. This process establishes much more than a meeting but an attitude that must exude for it to work.

### **Community Growth and the Apple Orchards**

The City of La Crescent has a variety of natural, cultural and historic features that make the community unique. The Mississippi River Valley offers natural elements including steep wooded slopes, bluff tops, wildlife, and apple orchards. These distinctive features have established a character that is uniquely La Crescent. In order to preserve this identity, these features must remain an important part the community.

There is concern that the loss of apple orchards is reason for concern about the community's heritage. The generally pro-growth stance the community has been able to support over the years is at least up for debate when the loss of apple orchards are considered. It is true that many orchards have already been lost to development and the few that remain are more valuable because of past decisions. The decisions of private landowners are certainly difficult to influence when the market offers more financial incentives than a community can sometimes provide. Aside from community ownership of the land or perpetual conservation easements, there are few assurances that apple orchards can stand the test of time on their own. Industry changes in apple orchard management are making it difficult for older orchards to compete with the newer, smaller sized, and more productive ones. This is forcing orchard owners to look at other ways to survive in an ever competitive market. For orchard owners with the available resources, purchasing new land for smaller, higher yield orchards is occurring. Those who cannot buy new land must make the best of their land. Some are considering development options to make ends meet.

If apple orchard lands are to be developed, conservation subdivision design should be used to preserve natural features, orchards, and open space. The benefits of conservation subdivision design far outweigh those offered by typical conventional subdivision design, many of which are measurable economic advantages to both the city and developer. The following lists some of these advantages.

- Conservation subdivision design offers the opportunity to reduce upfront construction costs and longterm infrastructure expenditures. This is realized through narrower lots, less street pavement, and shorter utility runs.
- Its uniqueness offer marketing and sales advantages over traditional developments. For example, a homeowner on a one-acre lot would receive the use of much more conservation land within the development. An amenity most developments could not offer.
- Homes in a conservation subdivision appreciate much faster as compared to typical subdivision design.
- Natural areas and open space that are preserved can help reduce the demand for public open space and parkland.
- Offers orchard owners the opportunity to continue operations in a financially feasible manner. Small tracts of less productive orchard land could be sold off as compact residential conservation developments. The additional revenue would provide resources to upgrade equipment and operations to remain competitive in the market.
- Conservation subdivision design could reduce storm water concerns associated with bluff top development with less hardcover and larger green areas for filtration and recharging.
- Creates an inviting living environment that is desirable to many.

The City needs to review its zoning and subdivision ordinances and update them as needed to allow for these alternative development methods. In terms of the zoning ordinance, the planned unit development would allow for this type of development. Subdivision design standards for street improvements and utilities will need review and updating. Narrower street widths should be allowed for these developments to reduce costs, maintenance, and environmental issues. Alternative storm water discharge, water, and sanitary sewer techniques should be allowed as well.

### **Economic Development**

La Crescent should make the retention of existing businesses the number one priority. This instills confidence in those businesses that have chosen the community as their place to do business and provides a solid foundation to build from. The loss of a business to any cause is not something any community wishes, especially when a business leaves to carry on business in another community. The City should develop a retention strategy that supports business expansion. This strategy could include many forms of financial assistance that make it attractive to grow in the community.

Attraction of new business and industry that provides jobs should be a priority following business retention. Due to the limited amount of land identified for commercial and industrial growth, the City should seek business and industry that provides the maximum number of jobs per square foot of building space. Manufacturing industries that require a high percentage of skilled labor should be targeted as ideal companies. Warehousing and storage businesses would not serve the economic development needs of the community.

The City should continue to be integral in the expansion of downtown and industrial areas. The City has development powers it can use for the redevelopment of these areas and should exercise them as needed to accomplish the goals identified within this plan.

