



Implementation and Action Plan

This chapter outlines how the vision of the plan will be implemented and how the plan should be amended in the future. This chapter also provides an action table with target completion dates and responsible parties.

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Guiding Daily Decisions



City Roles & Responsibilities



Responsibility for implementing this plan lies primarily with City Council, City Planning Commission, and City Staff.

City Council

City Council sets priorities, controls budgets and tax rates, and usually has the final say on key aspects of public and private development projects. The value and legitimacy of this plan is directly related to the degree to which Council members are aware of the plan and expect City actions to be consistent with this plan. Each council member should have a copy of this plan and should be familiar with the major goals and objectives described herein. City Council should expect and require that staff recommendations and actions both reference and remain consistent with this plan.

City Planning Commission

Land use and development recommendations are a core component of this plan, and the Planning Commission has a major role in guiding those decisions. Plan Commission members must each have a copy of this plan and must be familiar with its content, especially Chapter 3: Land Use and Community Design. It is generally the responsibility of Planning Commission to determine whether proposed projects are consistent with this plan, and to make decisions and recommendations that are consistent with this plan. In cases where actions that are inconsistent with this plan are deemed to be in the best interest of the City, the Planning Commission should initiate efforts to amend the plan to better reflect City interests. This will help to reinforce the legitimacy of the plan as an important tool in City functions.

City Staff

Key City staff and advisors have a significant influence on the selection and completion of all kinds of capital and operational projects. It is imperative that individuals in key roles know about, support, and actively work to implement the various strategies and actions in this plan. Specifically, the following people should consult and reference the comprehensive plan during budgeting processes, during planning for major public projects, and in the review of private

development projects:

- City Administrator
- Building and Zoning Official
- Community Development Director
- City Attorney
- Public Works Director

These key staff members are expected to know the various goals, objectives, strategies and actions laid out in this plan, and should sometimes reference that content in communications with residents and elected and appointed officials. The purpose of this extra effort is to strengthen staff recommendations and reinforce the plan as a relevant tool integral to City functions.

Education & Advocacy



Implementation of this plan also depends, to a great degree, on the actions and decisions of entities other than City government. The Action Plan (see Section 6.4) indicates responsible parties that the City of La Crescent does not control or direct. These include, and are not limited to:

- La Crescent Chamber of Commerce
- City of La Crosse
- Houston County and Winona County
- The La Crosse County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- The Bluffland Coalition
- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

It is necessary to persuade these entities to be active partners in the implementation of the goals, objectives, and strategies of this plan. The following City activities can support this effort:

- Share this plan with each organization, including a memo highlighting sections of the plan that anticipate collaboration between the City and the organization.
- Take the lead role in establishing a collaboration
- Know and communicate the intent of relevant objectives and strategies - partner organizations need to understand and buy in to the rationale before they will act.

Utilizing Existing Tools



Many of the strategies identified in this plan presume the use of existing City ordinances and programs. The City's key implementation tools include:

Operational Tools

- Annual Budget Process
- Capital Improvement Program

Regulatory Tools

- Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance
- Building and Housing Codes

Funding Tools

- Tax Abatement
- Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) Districts
- State and Federal Grant Programs



Guiding Annual Decisions



Annual Report

To provide lasting value and influence, this plan must be used and referenced regularly, especially during budgeting and goal setting processes. To inform these annual processes, the City Administrator will prepare, with input from the Plan Commission, other City staff and/or interns, a concise Comprehensive Plan Annual Report with the following information:

- Action items in progress or completed during the prior 12 months (celebrate success!)
- Recommendations for action items to pursue during the next 12 months.
- City actions and decisions during the past 12 months not consistent with the plan (if any).
- Recommendations for any amendments to the adopted plan.

Link to Annual City Budget

The most important opportunity for this plan to influence the growth and improvement of the City is through the annual goal-setting, budgeting and capital planning processes. These existing annual efforts determine what projects will and will not be pursued by the City, and so it is very important to integrate this plan into those processes every year.

The compilation of actions in the next section is a resource to support decisions about how and where to invest the City's limited resources. The Annual Report should draw from these actions. Plan Commission should make formal recommendations for Council consideration, identifying those choices and commitments most likely to further the goals and objectives identified in this plan.

The following process and schedule is recommended:

July - Staff completes the Comprehensive Plan Annual Report.

August - Plan Commission considers Annual Report and makes formal recommendation to Council regarding action items to pursue and any comprehensive plan amendments.

September - Council holds a public hearing and considers adoption of any comprehensive plan amendments.

October to November - City Council considers any recommended actions requiring municipal funding as part of the annual budget process.

Monitoring, Amending & Updating

Although this Plan is intended to guide decisions and actions by the City over the next 10 to 20 years, it is impossible to accurately predict future conditions in the City. Amendments may be appropriate from time to time, particularly if emerging issues or trends render aspects of the plan irrelevant or inappropriate. The City may be faced with an opportunity, such as a development proposal, that does not fit the plan but is widely viewed to be appropriate for the City. Should the City wish to approve such an opportunity, it should first amend the plan so that the decision is consistent with the plan. Such amendments should be carefully considered and should not become the standard response to proposals that do not fit the plan. Frequent amendments to meet individual development proposals threaten the integrity of the plan and the planning process and should be avoided.

Any changes to the plan text or maps constitute amendments to the plan and should follow a standard process as described in the following section. Amendments may be proposed by either the City Council or the Plan Commission, though a land owner or developer may also petition Plan Commission to introduce an amendment on their behalf. Amendments may be made at any time using this process, however in most cases the City should not amend the plan more than once per year.

The 20-year planning horizon of this plan defines the time period used to consider potential growth and change, but the plan itself should be fully updated well before 2036. Unlike an amendment, the plan update is a major re-write of the plan document and supporting maps. The purpose of the update is to incorporate new data and to ensure, through a process of new data evaluation and new public dialogue, that the plan remains relevant to current conditions and decisions. An update every ten years is recommended.

Plan Amendment Process

In the years between major plan updates it may be necessary or desirable to amend this plan. A straightforward amendment, such as a strategy or future land use map revision for which there is broad support, can be completed in about six to eight weeks through the following process.

Step One

A change is proposed by City Council, Plan Commission, or staff and is placed on the Plan Commission agenda for preliminary consideration. Private individuals (landowners, developers, others) can request an amendment through the City Administrator, who will forward the request to Plan Commission for consideration. Plan Commission decides if and how to proceed, and may direct staff to prepare or revise the proposed amendment.

Step Two

When Plan Commission has formally recommended an amendment, a City Council public hearing is scheduled and at least two weeks public notice is published. Notice of the proposed amendment should also be transmitted as appropriate to other entities that may be affected by or interested in the change, such as La Crescent Township.

Step Three

City Council hears formal comments on the proposed amendment, considers any edits to the amendment, then considers adoption of the amendment.

Step Four

Staff completes the plan amendment as approved, including an entry in the plan's amendment log. A revised PDF copy of the plan is posted to the City web site and replacement or supplement pages are issued to City staff and officials who hold hard copies of the plan.



About the Action Plan



The following pages feature a compilation of actions identified in Chapter 2 to help the City achieve its various goals and objectives. Not all “strategies” in Chapter 2 are included here - policies on how to make decisions are not presented in these tables. In some cases the action has been edited for brevity. See Chapter 2 for the full version as well as the goals and objectives behind these actions.

Deadlines

The “deadlines” identified to achieve these actions are not firm - rather they are indications of when the City may choose to pursue an action based on its importance or difficulty. Where multiple deadlines are noted, this indicates an ongoing or repetitive activity.

Responsible Parties

Most of these actions require leadership and effort by multiple people and organizations. These tables indicate those parties considered necessary to implementation.

Funding Sources

Most of these actions come with some cost. It is presumed that most could be supported by tax revenue from the City’s general fund. Where other sources of potential funding may exist, such as grant programs, these are noted.



Action Plan



Housing Actions		Target Completion Year			Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources
		2017-2019	2020-2025	2025-2035		
1	Prepare a marketing campaign for the City focused on attracting and retaining new families and young professionals.	X			Community Development Director, Chamber of Commerce	
2	Create user-friendly brochures and/or on-line guides to outline the permitting process for home improvement projects	X			Building and Zoning Official	
3	Create a no cost or subsidized program that provides the services of an architect or home builder to help interested homeowners visualize potential home rehabilitation and modernization projects		X		Plan Commission	
4	Create a no or low-interest loan program to help homeowners improve and modernize older properties in the City.		X		Plan Commission, City Council, local banks	
5	Create rebate programs and other financial incentives to support energy efficient home rehabilitation projects.		X			
6	Maintain civic programs (e.g. Neighbors in Action) focused specifically on assisting seniors in single family homes with home and property maintenance.	X	X	X		
7	Create a Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and purchase land to develop rental and senior housing in appropriate locations, especially around the Downtown area		X		City Council	
8	Examine and revise the City's zoning code to support improvements, expansions, creative redevelopment, and diversification of residential properties.	X			Plan Commission	
9	Consider amending the zoning ordinances to allow accessory dwelling units (e.g. units above garages	X			Plan Commission	
10	Consider creating new ordinances and/or incentive programs that encourage the development of affordable and senior housing integrated with market-rate housing.		X			

Implementation and Action Plan



Economic Development Actions	Target Completion Year			Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources
	2017-2019	2020-2025	2025-2035		
1 Collaborate with and support the Chamber of Commerce in efforts to maintain regular contact and communication with local businesses, especially manufacturers and other primary sector employers.	X	X	X	Community Development Director	
2 Continue to use Tax Increment Finance Districts to facilitate development, especially to assist redevelopment costs.	X	X	X	City Council	
3 Continue to utilize Tax Abatement as a strategy to encourage business expansion.	X	X	X	City Council	
4 Work with the La Crescent-Hokah school district to increase connections with local businesses.	X	X	X	Community Development Director, Chamber of Commerce	
5 Encourage local businesses to establish internship and apprenticeship collaborations with UW-La Crosse, Western Technical College, and Viterbo.	X	X	X	Community Development Director, Chamber of Commerce	
6 Take an active role in Downtown redevelopment by acquiring property and soliciting redevelopment proposals.	X	X	X		
7 Actively pursue the development of access improvements to Blue Lake, including property acquisition and/or conversion from other uses if necessary.	X			City Administrator	
8 Actively pursue the improvement of bluffland and lowland hiking trails and connections to those trails from downtown, including a bridge over 14/61.	X	X		Public Works Director, City Council	
9 Enhance the City and/or Chamber websites to promote local recreation opportunities.	X			Office Assistant, City Administrator	
10 Encourage the establishment of a recreation tourism booster group in the City to help promote local resources.	X				
11 Collaborate with the La Crosse County Convention and Visitors Bureau to promote La Crescent attractions.	X	X		Community Development Director, City Administrator	
12 Incorporate more recreation-oriented activities into Applefest or host new, standalone events focused on recreation in the bluffs and/or river/lake.	X	X		La Crescent Apple Festival Inc.	
13 Create a high-profile trail from the Mississippi River to Hokah via Downtown La Crescent.		X		Public Works Director, Houston County	



Natural Systems, Open Spaces and Recreation Actions		Target Completion Year			Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources
		2017-2019	2020-2025	2025-2035		
1	Encourage the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to install interpretive sign(s) at new kayak accesses and along the Wagon Wheel Trail.	X				
2	Explore construction of a birdwatching overlook along the shore of Blue Lake, including parking and interpretive signs.		X		City Council, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	
3	Collaborate with La Crescent Township and private landowners to establish a contiguous trail network in the bluffs immediately surrounding the City.	X	X	X		
4	Work with La Crosse area partner governments to enhance the use of bluffland trails in the La Crescent area, including identification of public access sites on regional bluffland maps and use of common trail signage standards	X	X	X	Bluffland Coalition	
5	Continue to collaborate with the Minnesota Land Trust to identify and pursue acquisition of bluffland sites for protection from development and public access improvements	X	X	X		
6	Establish the downtown area as a trailhead for hiking, biking and canoe/kayak adventures in and around La Crescent, including an informational kiosk, public-access bathrooms, bike racks, etc.	X	X	X		
7	Establish a well-maintained, web-based source of information, and a broader, comprehensive promotion strategy, to share information about outdoor recreation sites, trails, and amenities in the La Crescent area.	X				
8	Prevent tree cutting around homes on the bluffs by working with La Crescent Township, Houston County, and private landowners to establish and enforce strict regulatory limitations on tree cutting.	X	X	X		
9	Plant more street trees in all parts of the City, and especially in newer neighborhoods.	X	X	X	City Council, Public Works Director	
10	Pursue and maintain Tree City USA designation.	X			Plan Commission, City Council	
11	Continue to use, implement the 2012 Park and Recreation Plan. Update that plan every 5 to 7 years.	X				
12	Maintain and implement a capital improvement schedule for all City parks that emphasizes trail development, signage improvements, and accessibility improvements.	X	X	X	Public Works Director, City Council	
13	Maintain participation in and implement best practices encouraged by the Minnesota GreenStep program	X	X	X	City Council, City Administrator	

	Downtown Enhancement Actions	Target Completion Year			Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources
		2017-2019	2020-2025	2025-2035		
1	Improve key downtown intersections with corner bumpouts to slow traffic, increase landscaping, reducing the pedestrian crossing distance, and identify the core downtown area.		X			
2	Add dedicated bike parking racks throughout the downtown area.	X			Public Works Director, Chamber of Commerce	
3	Improve signage identifying access to downtown, especially from the north.	X			Public Works Director, Chamber of Commerce	
4	Design, fund and build a pedestrian bridge over 14/61 to connect downtown to the waterfront and provide a visual indicator of downtown's location.		X		Public Works Director, City Council	
5	Improve existing public parking lots downtown, including pavement quality and signage.	X	X		Public Works Director, City Council	
6	Provide routine reminders for downtown business employees to reserve prime parking for customers by parking their own vehicles in secondary lots and streets.	X	X	X	Community Development Director, Chamber of Commerce	



Community Facilities & Services Actions		Target Completion Year			Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources
		2017-2019	2020-2025	2025-2035		
1	Review development ordinances and applications each year for consistency with changes in state or federal regulations, best practices, and environmental stewardship. Areas of special concern include renewable energy systems and greywater recycling systems.	X	X	X	Plan Commission	
2	Maintain a rolling Five Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) each year to plan for the annual construction and maintenance of community facilities.	X	X	X		
3	Meet with representatives from the DOT, Houston County and La Crescent Township to discuss planning for a future joint public works/highway shop, storage and maintenance facility.	X			Public Works Director, MnDOT, Houston County	
4	Work with energy providers, land owners, and other communities to support appropriate applications of renewable energy and utilization of on-site distributed energy generation.	X	X	X		
5	Work with surrounding counties, townships, state and federal agencies to adopt a Hazard Mitigation Plan		X		City Administrator	
6	Complete an organizational study to identify short and long term City staff needs.	X			City Administrator, City Council	
7	Maximize the community's capital investment in school facilities by making those facilities readily available, as feasible, for other uses and events that support social interaction and health within the community.	X	X	X	City Council, School District	
8	Engage local students in civic involvement and City operations. This may include student representation on City committees	X	X	X	City Council, School District	
9	Consider developing a "sister city" to La Crescent to share and exchange ideas for community improvement projects.	X			City Council	
10	Consider the use of new technologies, such as mobile applications, to provide or make more accessible information to residents and visitors regarding community amenities, events and news related to city meetings, projects, and development review.	X	X	X	City Administrator, Office Coordinator	

Transportation & Mobility Actions	Target Completion Year			Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources	
	2017-2019	2020-2025	2025-2035			
1	Implement the 2013 City of La Crescent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, including recommended sidewalk, bike lane and crosswalk improvements whenever a street is improved	X	X	X	Public Works Director	
2	Complete a grade separated pedestrian and bicycle access across STH 16/61 to improve access to the Mississippi River and Blue Lake Marsh from the downtown area.		X			
3	Create a well connected regional trail system, including connections to the Root River Trail and Mississippi River Scenic Trail.		X	X	Public Works Director, Houston County	
4	Continue to promote the growth of the La Crosse Municipal Transit (MTU) system ridership in La Crescent. In collaboration with local and regional organizations, the City will host events that encourage and celebrate alternative transportation.					
5	The City will work with La Crescent - Hokah School District to promote Safe Routes to School via education, evaluation and engineering, enforcement and encouragement (i.e. the "Five E's").	X	X	X		
6	The City will work with State and County agencies to provide scenic overlooks along their roadways to enhance regional tourism and recreation.				Public Works Director, MnDOT and/or County agencies	
7	Explore the possibility of extending 7th Street to STH 16/S. Chestnut Street				Public Works Director, MnDot	



Land Use and Community Design Actions		Target Completion Year			Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources
		2017-2019	2020-2025	2025-2035		
1	Amend the zoning ordinance to allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)	X			Plan Commission	
2	Create a master plan (or plans) for all of the shoreland sites along the highways, including those on the east side of 14/61 and 16, and those on the south side of 14/16 ("the pike").	X	X		Plan Commission, Property owners	
3	Create an overlay zoning district to guide aesthetic improvements to the shoreland areas near the rail lines (west shore of the wetlands and Blue Lake)	X			Plan Commission	
4	Amend the zoning ordinance in most residential districts to allow greater lot coverage	X			Plan Commission	

Collaborations & Partnerships Actions		Target Completion Year			Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources
		2017-2019	2020-2025	2025-2035		
1	Explore collaborations options with La Crescent Township, including a long-term orderly annexation agreement	X			City Council, La Crescent Township	
2	Collaborate closely with the School District on issues related to expansion or improvement of school sites that are within direct City control, such as land use and access, utilities and traffic. Collaboration could include assistance with studies or infrastructure construction.	X			City Council, City Administrator, School District	
3	Collaborate with the School District, the Chamber of Commerce and others to promote the best qualities of the La Crescent-Hokah schools to prospective residents.	X	X	X	Community Development Director, School District, Chamber of Commerce	