

**Community Development Authority
of the City of Onalaska**

Wednesday, September 12, 2018

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1 The meeting of the Community Development Authority of the City of Onalaska was called to
2 order at 3:31 p.m. on Wednesday, September 12, 2018. It was noted that the meeting had been
3 announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

4
5 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Ald. Jim Olson, Ald. Jim Binash, John
6 Lyche, Ann Brandau, Ron Johnson, Joe Bucheger, Mike Gargaro

7
8 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, Planner/Zoning Inspector Katie Aspenson,
9 Bryan Harjes of Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc.

10
11 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meetings**

12
13 Motion by John, second by Joe, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as printed and
14 on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

15
16 On voice vote, motion carried.

17
18 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

19
20 Mike called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of the
21 meeting.

22
23 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

24
25 **Item 4 – Discussion & Consideration of the Onalaska Redevelopment Project:**

- 26
27 a. Review Comments from Stakeholder Meetings
28 b. Visioning for State Road 16 Corridor & Downtown Onalaska in context:
29 i. Physical Site Analysis
30 ii. Market Findings
31 iii. Stakeholder Comments/Feedback
32

33 Bryan said he plans to cover three key components from both the State Road 16 and Downtown
34 Onalaska districts: themes from what was shared at the stakeholder meetings; translating those
35 themes into a visual that shows opportunities; and a discussion about precedent projects,
36 including photographic representations of development types. Bryan said HKGi also has
37 prepared planned view similar comparisons that mostly focus on the commercial area, and he
38 would like to follow up with a vision discussion. Bryan told CDA members Phase I is nearing
39 completion and said they will begin examining concepts at the October 10 meeting. Bryan said
40 HKGi will begin addressing redevelopment concepts at the conclusion of today’s meeting, and
41 he will present alternatives for discussion at the October 10 meeting. Bryan said perhaps those

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42 concepts will be refined, or perhaps they will be discussed with stakeholders or as part of a
43 developers' roundtable. Bryan said his intent is that they will range from development intensity
44 – perhaps some smaller-scale reinvestment and some large, big-picture visioning.

45
46 Bryan said HKGi had met with stakeholder groups – “almost everyone within the corridor of
47 significant importance” – on August 28 and 29. One of the meetings had been a telephone
48 conversation with a representative from Phillips Edison & Company, which owns the building in
49 which Kohl's operates. HKGi will attempt to meet Thursday morning with Sue Kolve, who
50 owns Sue Kolve's Salon & Day Spa on Main Street. HKGi also has a meeting scheduled with
51 the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to discuss State Trunk Highway 16. Bryan referred
52 to feedback HKGi had received from Gundersen Health System, which operates on a dead-end
53 road (South Kinney Coulee Road), and said HKGi will discuss with WisDOT the feasibility of
54 creating an overpass there. Another topic for discussion with WisDOT is broader access
55 management for the STH 16 corridor and what it could mean for future redevelopment.

56
57 Bryan first addressed the downtown district and said the following are the core themes for that
58 district:

- 59
- 60 • Continue to redevelop the downtown and the highway corridors and provide something
61 that really is not offered in this region.
 - 62 • Leverage the natural amenities of the Black River as well as the outdoor recreation
63 opportunities of the two park amenities (Great River Landing, Dash-Park).
 - 64 • Focus on food and drink, artisan shops, or a brewery or distillery. Complement them
65 with an outfitter (e.g. kayak rentals, bicycle shop). Offer public and private programming
66 to help bring activity to this area.
 - 67 • Continue to support the addition of local small businesses (e.g. retail, restaurants,
68 personal services and offices).
 - 69 • Continue to address the parking issues, possibly with more effective solutions, targeted
70 locations for parking lots, more on-street parking, and/or better signage and wayfinding.
 - 71 • Seriously examine upgrading the segment of the crushed gravel bicycle trail from the
72 City of La Crosse to the southern portion of the City of Onalaska into a paved bicycle
73 trail to increase accessibility.
 - 74 • Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities – particularly along State Trunk Highway 35
75 and 3rd Avenue.

76
77 Bryan noted the crushed gravel trail also is a snowmobile trail.

78
79 Ann said the trail segment to which Bryan had referred cannot be altered as it is maintained by
80 the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Ann explained it is her understanding the
81 reason that bicycle trails in Minnesota are paved is they are Minnesota Department of
82 Transportation trails. Excess asphalt is utilized to repair trails. By comparison, the Wisconsin

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83 DNR has an outstanding policy that its trails will be comprised of pea gravel. Ann noted the
84 City of Onalaska owns a section of the Great River State Trail and said the city could pave its
85 section of the trail.

86
87 City Administrator Rindfleisch told Ann the city has assumed maintenance duties in exchange
88 for collection of the revenue from trail passes. City Administrator Rindfleisch said it must be
89 determined if it is prudent to pave the trail if snowmobilers utilize it during the winter months.

90
91 Bryan noted several individuals had raised the possibility of paving the trail, and he continued
92 with his discussion of core themes in the downtown district:

- 93
94
- 95 • Promote the addition of housing in and surrounding downtown, and also along the
96 waterfront. This could vary in a variety of different forms depending upon available
97 development sites. Options could be owner-occupied or individual market rate rental
98 apartment pieces that are in high-density residential. Townhomes and row houses also
99 could be components. The existing surrounding neighborhood will be an area targeted
100 for reinvestment as amenities become important in the downtown district.
 - 101 • There are some additional potential early phase redevelopment sites that exist beyond the
102 current ongoing projects.
 - 103 • Think about strategies to promote the assembly of undervalued properties to create a
104 larger and more viable redevelopment site, or options for redevelopment sites. There are
105 opportunities at the quarter block, half block, and full block sizes.

106 Bryan showed CDA members a grid of the downtown district, pointing out the intersection of
107 STH 35 and Irvin Street and mentioning a proposed project by local developer, Marvin Wanders.
108 Bryan pointed out the railroad crossing at Irvin Street and said perhaps a pedestrian-oriented
109 flashing beacon could be installed there. Bryan mentioned HKGi is thinking about additional
110 circulation on the backside of Marvin Wanders' development. Bryan said there is an opportunity
111 to create a loop between Irvin and Elm streets, perhaps installing another flashing beacon at Elm
112 Street. Bryan said HKGi had examined the downtown alleyways, particularly those located on
113 the east side of STH 35, and suggested they could provide a conduit from the area along the
114 corridor to the amenities in the downtown district.

115
116 Bryan next addressed broader development opportunities in the downtown district, showing
117 CDA members a site plan of Marvin Wanders' proposed development (three buildings), which
118 would be located on city-owned blocks along the railroad line and the riverfront. Bryan said site
119 programming presents another opportunity, noting HKGi had spoken with Onalaska School
120 District Superintendent Fran Finco about joint usage of the district's administrative offices'
121 parking lot located on 2nd Avenue South. HKGi also is looking at how to enhance the gateway to
122 the Black River with site programming.

123

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124 Mike said he assumes Bryan has seen the different phases of the Great River Landing Project.

125

126 Bryan said he has and told Mike the diagram the CDA is seeing is in reaction to the feedback
127 HKGi had received.

128

129 Bryan next addressed site reinvestment and pointed out buildings that perhaps could be
130 repurposed, enhanced, or considered for possible reinvestment zones. Bryan pointed out
131 properties facing STH 35 that are approximately 6 feet higher and said half-block development
132 might have to occur in this area due to limitations. Bryan said this area could include owner-
133 occupied small businesses, service uses, or office uses. Bryan pointed out the area located
134 behind Dash-Park and said this area could be the site of a redevelopment project. Bryan said
135 another near-term opportunity (from now to three to five years away) could be possible to the
136 north, where there currently is a mixed-use structure and an automotive shop. Bryan pointed out
137 “underutilized land” located to the south, and he said there could be opportunities behind the
138 school district’s administrative offices. Bryan said long-term development opportunities –
139 perhaps additional housing – could occur on the north and south sides of Main Street.

140

141 Bryan next addressed development types, pointing out an area where a corner development could
142 occur and noting the development is three stories tall and has one story of ground-level retail.
143 Bryan said perhaps ground-level residential property could occur on the secondary street
144 frontage. Bryan said smaller-scale developments could occur on a quarter block, with a
145 “marquee piece” of commercial property located on the corner or extending slightly down, and
146 residential property occupying the majority of the space. Another option could be a variation in
147 façade scale, where there are ground-level retail establishments, additional housing, and “step-
148 back” residential behind. Service uses over the top of retail also could be an option. Bryan said
149 high-density residential typically is “stick frame” and three to five stories in height, adding that
150 HKGi also will examine parking ratios. Bryan said medium-density residential, stating that there
151 might be a “higher fit and finish” in some locations and perhaps more affordable in others,
152 depending upon location and the availability of product type. Medium-density residential has its
153 own walk-up access and service loading access. Bryan said there are instances when
154 reinvestment in existing structures to make them “creative and unique” – for example, converting
155 an industrial building into an office use or a shared-use facility – can be beneficial. Bryan said
156 such reinvestment could occur on the narrow stretch on the west side of STH 35. Bryan said he
157 believes the brand of the downtown must be taken into consideration, noting there are two core
158 blocks of some of the more “historic charm” of Main Street. Bryan asked how that can be
159 maintained “without making everything new in that area.”

160

161 Bryan welcomed feedback from the CDA.

162

163 Ald. Binash referred to a recent request to convert a residential home into a bar on the 200 block
164 of Elm Street and said several of the residents in the neighborhood told the Common Council at

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165 its August 14 meeting they did not want that type of business in their neighborhood. Ald. Binash
166 said the residents believed having a bar in their neighborhood would be disruptive.

167
168 Bryan said he believes it is part of “what is really the face or front of these uses.” Bryan
169 described the area as “a residential corridor” and said, “I think people are envisioning it being
170 that in the future. It may be more intense in the future, but it’s not likely to have commercial
171 uses sort of leak back to 3rd Avenue, for the most part.” Bryan said he believes the residents
172 along 3rd Avenue South fear how much the traffic, energy, and clientele would push back into
173 their neighborhood if a bar were present. Bryan asked, “Where are those sites targeted for in the
174 downtown? Do you look for more along the commercial corridor in certain areas? Do you for
175 more on the west side where you don’t have a neighborhood impact?”

176
177 Ald. Binash said he believes the residents’ primary concerns were the clientele a bar would
178 attract and its hours of operation. Ald. Binash also noted there also were safety concerns because
179 the alleyway would be utilized by the bar’s clientele and the children in the neighborhood would
180 be close by. Ald. Binash said, “If it may be something different where it isn’t late night and the
181 clientele is not an issue, it might certainly be something else.”

182
183 City Administrator Rindfleisch said he does not believe the neighborhood’s residents have yet
184 seen the vision of moving people through downtown and off STH 35 and developing the
185 properties there. City Administrator Rindfleisch said the plan was not in line with what is
186 envisioned for that area, and he also said the bar in question (Spillway Pub) previously had
187 operated at another location in the city and the residents along 3rd Avenue South did not want
188 that establishment’s clientele to come to the proposed new establishment.

189
190 Ann asked if the residents objected to the Spillway Pub relocating to their neighborhood.

191
192 Ald. Binash told Ann, “It was something like that,” and he said the proposal called for both a bar
193 and a residence.

194
195 Katie said the residence would have been a single-family, ranch-style house that faced the
196 neighborhood. The proposed bar would have been located in the rear, meaning it only would
197 have been seen from STH 35. Katie said, “What’s interesting about that development is it’s very
198 much what we’re talking about today. They were attempting to integrate commercial into the
199 residential, and at the same time respect the residential character. I spoke with the developer
200 after the fact, and his comments based on the feedback that he received from the residents were
201 even had the Common Council approved to move it forward he would have rescinded the
202 proposal because he doesn’t want the neighborhood to be against the project. I think that that’s
203 good in terms of, it was an idea. Does it work? And it shows, if anything, the process that we
204 had created to question and to bring unique development forward to the Council works. It just
205 wasn’t the right project. I think that there’s potential for it. It’s just, is it the right project for that

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206 area at the right time?”

207
208 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “One suggestion I would make in terms of moving forward
209 to some of those residential properties we’re talking about consolidating, and if we sample
210 projects, densifying and developing that, that perhaps some of those off [STH] 35 further away
211 be converted almost as-is to the existing structure. ... If you could show some examples of what
212 that looks like to the neighbors ... You’d have a house, but in a commercial area that’s very
213 walkable for people to go to.”

214
215 Bryan said HKGi has done that in other communities.

216
217 John asked Bryan if HKGi has looked at any projects with art space.

218
219 Bryan said, “Not for this project, but for a number of other projects. I think that’s something we
220 could look at.” Bryan told CDA members he would show them at the next meeting an example
221 of such a project that occurred in Hastings, Minnesota.

222
223 Ald. Binash asked how many liquor licenses would be available if either a brewery or a bar was
224 established in the downtown corridor.

225
226 City Administrator Rindfleisch said the city has some reserved licenses available at the \$10,000
227 level.

228
229 Katie said she believes everyone who the city and HKGi spoke to regarding the downtown
230 district has been very positive about the Great River Landing, Dash-Park, and David Reay’s,
231 among other things. Katie said, “I think people are starting to see something happen and are
232 interested for more. I think there’s an appetite that is being created.”

233
234 John said the densification the CDA has discussed will begin if Marvin Wanders’ project
235 proceeds.

236
237 Joe asked if the Todd Delagrave property is the first that will have some thought process, in
238 regard to timing.

239
240 Bryan said, “That could go earlier than later, depending upon outcomes of his business.” Bryan
241 said Todd told him he either might sell the property in question to his son or get rid of the
242 business, and he also said, “Does that use really fit the character of what downtown wants to
243 become? You would have the opportunity here with a fairly decent parcel size to be able to
244 achieve, even if you were to look at maybe including the smaller building that’s just on the
245 corner in the alley, as an entire project. That could be a one- to five-year redevelopment
246 opportunity. It could be mixed use, obviously retail storefronts toward Main Street, housing, and

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247 maybe some additional parking as a part of that.”

248

249 Ann asked Bryan how he envisions redevelopment and incorporating parking, and she said it
250 appears extra parking behind a structure will be necessary if HKGi’s vision of having everything
251 close to the sidewalk.

252

253 Bryan showed CDA members a slide and said, “Sometimes what they’ll do is park at grade and
254 have two stories up above that. The access comes off of the alley into that development. It
255 depends on the mix and the makeup of uses out there, and it’s really order of magnitude at
256 development sites.”

257

258 Ald. Binash suggested perhaps constructing a parking ramp at the top of 3rd Avenue South and
259 Irvin Street that would allow both parking on top and parking underneath. Ald. Binash also said
260 Mayor Joe Chilsen had suggested establishing a one-way street and having angle parking on both
261 sides to create more parking.

262

263 Bryan referred to areas on the map he described as “other fields that are open,” and he asked if
264 there are shared-use agreements for nighttime activity.

265

266 Ann said individuals who attend events at Dash-Park will not walk from the park to a nearby
267 parking lot, and she told Bryan that Sue Kolve is angry because her parking spaces are being
268 utilized by people who do not want to walk half a block.

269

270 Bryan said, “That’s what the draw does. It changes the perception of what that area is.”

271

272 Ann said she is not troubled by the notion of having to walk after she parks her vehicle in
273 another city. However, Ann also said she wants to park directly in front a building when she is
274 in Onalaska, adding she believes it is a mentality shared by many who reside here because it is
275 what they are used to.

276

277 Bryan assured CDA members that HKGi will address downtown parking and attempt to
278 demonstrate how it could work between uses, and how to honor parking spaces for
279 redevelopment sites.

280

281 Bryan next addressed the State Road 16 corridor and shared the following:

282

- 283 • Most of the current property owners have had long-term commitments to this retail
284 corridor.
- 285 • They remain confident in its future as a retail corridor, and they have expressed an
286 openness to the corridor’s adjusting to retail’s continuing evolution. Bryan said, “The
287 message was, retail isn’t dead. Retail will always evolve. There is always going to be a

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- 288 demand for bricks and mortar as a part of this piece. But what is it going to become?
289 And how are we going to work through it?"
- 290 • Retail tenants (Best Buy, Shopko, Kohl's) generally seem to be interested in downsizing
291 by reducing square footages. Oversized buildings that are single-tenanted remain. What
292 is the first step toward multitenant those buildings?
 - 293 • The corridor is generally overparked. The city's current minimum parking requirement is
294 6.7 per 1,000. Typical retail is 4.5, 5.0, or 5.5 per 1,000. Bryan said, "There is
295 availability out there within the demand of that parking. It could open up for infill
296 development opportunities [and] additional sites for development."
 - 297 • There are roadway, circulation, and access concerns. The potential improvements that
298 have been identified include the Theater Road/County Road PH intersection and the
299 eastern connection to South Kinney Coulee Road. A suggestion was made to convert
300 Pralle Road into a public street; however, there also was opposition to that suggestion.
 - 301 • There are approximately five years remaining in an eight-year mill and overlay project on
302 STH 16. Bryan said he will ask WisDOT officials if they plan to do anything else on
303 STH 16 once that project has been completed.
 - 304 • Many property owners believe there are opportunities for the City of Onalaska to become
305 more of a partner than a roadblock. This includes reducing excessive parking
306 requirements, improving roadway circulation and traffic issues, and having fewer
307 requirements regarding property improvements (e.g. storm water, landscaping).
 - 308 • STH 16 corridor's size is constrained due to the broader macro scale of the bluffs and the
309 river valley, which limits the potential for retail expansion.
 - 310 • STH 16 does not feel like it has too much retail space. Bryan said, "I think that's a good
311 and a bad. People who are maybe looking for opportunities to be in a new facility, where
312 could that go? I think that's the struggle. But how do you work with existing tenants to
313 move the pieces around? That's the challenge. Nobody wants to shut their building
314 down for a year and a half while they build on their site. How do you begin to think
315 about finding homes for people to move them around in the right locations?"
 - 316 • Some infill redevelopment opportunities include the older, oversized buildings. Some of
317 the depths on the multitenant buildings are 110 to 120 feet deep. Depths of 50 to 70 feet
318 are typically needed today, so what can be done with the backside of those uses? Perhaps
319 other potential outlots and oversized parking lots, and it could include infill or
320 reconfiguration with broader redevelopment.
 - 321 • Some infill redevelopment challenges include cross-access agreements, store sightline
322 preservation requirements that are part of tenant lease agreements, and a lack of shared
323 parking.
 - 324 • Interest in adding new development types to the STH 16 corridor. This includes having
325 the option to purchase a product online, pick it up onsite, and depart immediately.
 - 326 • Housing, entertainment, and experience-based retail components were identified as
327 crucial components. Bryan said the latter is the ongoing trend in retail. It occurs at a
328 collection of the franchise level and the national level. How do you build on the

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329 amenities to attract customers?

330

331 John asked Bryan to provide a more detailed definition of experience-based retail.

332

333 Bryan said experience-based retail can be looked at two ways, noting downtown Onalaska has its
334 own identity with experience-based retail, meaning smaller shops and outdoor recreation.

335 However, with STH 16 it might be the combination of doing outdoor entertainment, food and
336 drink, and casual stroll-shopping in a high-quality environment that makes consumers feel very
337 comfortable and want to remain longer.

338

- 339 • The area is not bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly. There are limited pedestrian pass trails
340 and bicycle routes. How can better connections be made to aid major employers and
341 adjacent neighborhoods?
- 342 • Perhaps the city would consider establishing a TIF District or a redevelopment district in
343 this area to aid incentives for reinvestment and redevelopment.
- 344 • Since the City of Onalaska shares the STH 16 corridor with the City of La Crosse, there
345 needs to be a shared vision of what the corridor will become.
- 346 • There needs to be a focus on planning and redevelopment on both sides. This includes
347 access – where do the signals line up, how does circulation work properly, and how does
348 it benefit both sides?

349

350 Bryan said he would next discuss circulation and opportunities along the STH 16 corridor, and
351 then discuss development in greater detail. Bryan showed CDA members a map showing the
352 network of roadways (the interchange at STH 16 and Interstate 90 down to STH 157). There are
353 three signals along the corridor. There also is a right-in and a right-out, as well as a three-quarter
354 access. There is a bicycle trail on the City of La Crosse's side, and there now are bicycle lanes
355 on County Road PH to connect the network. However, Bryan said, "Essentially, everything else
356 is a private drive on backside circulation. How could we improve that? Do we look at other
357 opportunities for public ways through here, or integrating that with a potential transformation to
358 the [Valley View] Mall site on the east side? How does that work with intersection
359 configurations?" Bryan singled out the Theater Road/County Highway PH intersection and
360 described it as "a challenging location." Bryan said that as he continues to speak with City
361 Engineer Jarrod Holter, perhaps CDA members could suggest realigning pieces or closing access
362 points and adding roundabouts. Bryan also suggested there could be an opportunity to connect to
363 Gundersen with a trail component.

364

365 Bryan next addressed development opportunities, pointing out infrastructure components (storm
366 water, sanitary sewer, and water) and a transmission line on the map. Bryan also highlighted the
367 Fauver Hill School site, which Gundersen owns and plans to demolish, and he asked what it
368 could become in the near term.

369

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370 Bryan said, “When we talk about commercial and mixed-use development types, especially in
371 sort of a commercial-anchored area, you start to organize them around these retail-type
372 categories: big-box, mid-box, junior-box, and inline sites. Where do you find them? You find
373 them anchored with malls; the power center, [meaning] the larger general merchandise folks; the
374 lifestyle center, which begins to get into the experience retail; and a more convenient strip, which
375 you see in a downtown.” Bryan said the power centers – which, based on the conversation he
376 had heard, are still viable – are a mix of everything from food-anchored establishments to major
377 retailers such as Target to “mid-box” establishments. Bryan said HKGi had taken a site
378 photograph of a 44-acre area, and also a site photograph of two smaller areas (approximately 15
379 acres) located along STH 16. Bryan said HKGi next sought out precedents with existing
380 projects. Bryan showed CDA members what he called “a traditional power center” located in
381 Eagen, Minnesota with a clean access and circulation plan throughout the entire site. Bryan then
382 showed CDA members a similar center in Woodbury, Minnesota that also has a clear circulation
383 path for the site. Bryan noted that while there are traditional box-anchored pieces present, there
384 also are amenities as well as an office component. Bryan also showed CDA members the
385 Fountains at Arbor Lakes, located in Maple Grove, Minnesota, where consumers pass by the
386 inline establishments to reach the major destination. Bryan said lifestyle centers and told CDA
387 members this is where consumers think about “experience shopping.” Bryan described as being
388 the new version of the mall, but the consumer is outdoors, in and out to each store, and there is a
389 similar vibe to shopping on Main Street. Bryan showed CDA members a slide of the Shoppes at
390 Arbor Lakes, also located in Maple Grove, Minnesota, and noted the buildings were placed down
391 Main Street. The district includes a grocery anchor, a Trader Joe’s, a movie theater, and
392 structured and field parking. Bryan said a lifestyle center such as this one creates an
393 environment for people to be in.

394

395 City Administrator Rindfleisch said he has had several requests to bring a Trader Joe’s to
396 Onalaska.

397

398 Bryan said it is important to activate the space so there are opportunities to attract people, even in
399 a chain environment. Bryan also said high amenities, such as fountains and providing people a
400 place to sit outside and consume a beverage, are part of the lifestyle center piece. Bryan noted
401 that tenant mix is generally higher, but it does not have to be depending upon the makeup of the
402 amenities. Bryan showed CDA members the New Town Village idea, which is a smaller scale
403 development and one he believes could be applicable to the two 15-acre areas located along STH
404 16. Bryan said it is a mix of uses vertically, and it is developed around amenity-based retail
405 goods and services. Bryan next addressed a project called The Village at Mendota Heights
406 (Minn.), which is 18 acres and a mix of commercial office uses in the front, and supporting
407 residential uses and commercial uses off the back side. Bryan said there is ground-level retail
408 office above standalone inline retail, central amenity such as concerts, office uses, some structure
409 parking, and surrounding residential uses.

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411 Bryan showed CDA members a slide of the Bayshore Mall, which is near Milwaukee and has
412 undergone extensive redevelopment and reinvestment, has gone “very vertical,” has integrated
413 housing, and is anchored by more traditional mall tenants. Bryan noted HKGi had met with City
414 of La Crosse representatives and told CDA members something similar could happen at Valley
415 View Mall.

416
417 Bryan told CDA members they should be thinking about signage and wayfinding; specifically,
418 what it means on the STH 16 corridor. Bryan asked if there is a design guideline aesthetic that is
419 a corridor vision between the City of La Crosse and the City of Onalaska. Bryan also asked if
420 Onalaska owns its own brand, or if each development owns its own brand. Bryan returned to the
421 slide of Maple Grove, Minnesota and showed CDA members its “100 percent intersection.”
422 Each corner has been branded – similar materials, but different development names and
423 aesthetics. Bryan asked how the city can do that through the STH 16 corridor to create a similar
424 retail destination and strengthen the power of the entire corridor while at the same time allowing
425 each individual development type to have its own brand and identity.

426
427 Bryan welcomed feedback regarding the STH 16 corridor and told CDA members, “The
428 diagrams are pretty simple now because I think we are looking at three distinct pods, and how
429 those shake out we’ll play with in the concepts.”

430
431 Ann inquired about the property owners who might or not be ready to redevelop, but would like
432 to see something happen. Ann cited the example of Best Buy, asking if the retailer has stated it
433 no longer wants to have the larger box store, and if developers are willing to work with the
434 retailer.

435
436 Bryan told Ann, “Maybe some are more sophisticated than others in the corridor. I would say
437 others are more open to ideas about future opportunities that could come. What it does take is
438 available space to move the pieces around or realign how things could look or feel in that area.
439 A lot of that is in the mechanics or the phasing in how that development could take place. It may
440 involve an area that is outside this corridor or a temporary relocation or a permanent relocation
441 of a specific user, if that makes the most sense, in order to better assemble land to create a more
442 impactful development project that will bring larger users and larger developers to the scene to
443 see the potential for what that could become.”

444
445 Ann asked, “When you look over these areas, to what extent are you looking at redeveloping and
446 repurposing existing buildings versus, ‘We would like to see this demolished?’ ”

447
448 Bryan told Ann he has not yet thought about that in a detailed level, “but ... the mechanics of,
449 ‘How could you actually do this?’ Redevelopment is tricky. It takes time. ... It’s not necessarily
450 organized, and it takes a number of different partners to make it happen. Bryan returned to the
451 map, pointed to an area with valuable properties, and also to a location where the properties

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452 might be less valuable. Bryan asked, “Is there someone with the foresight to come in and say,
453 ‘We could really use that improved circulation component, and maybe we begin to line
454 components of how we get access through that site, notwithstanding specific projects or history.’
455 We have to have the wherewithal to look behind the individualness of each of those properties,
456 look at them at a collective whole, and allow that development group to take assessment of that
457 and see how much time and energy and investment it would take to make those changes. The
458 one thing we have going for us is that there is significant land availability because we’re
459 overparked in a lot of those areas. There’s a draw with additional square footage that could
460 come with that. Reorganization is a draw. It’s an incentive out there to make that happen.”

461
462 Ann asked, “What is the first thing? Is it getting the roads through before you do anything else,
463 as far as if you wanted to look at redevelopment? Does the design of traffic flow have to be step
464 one?”

465
466 Bryan said, “That is a component of it. I think it’s also the ongoing conversations that this group
467 or staff has, and sort of the presentation of the desire to have higher, better uses in these
468 locations. What could that be? What are the tools to make that happen, particularly on the
469 financing side? What do we need to do from a regulatory side – land use and zoning – to
470 facilitate those changes more readily so that the development groups out there don’t have to
471 waste time and energy and money pushing something that is not desired by the group? It’s a
472 collection of all that part of the package. What we’ll do at the end of the day is have sort of
473 preferred diagrams or frameworks for transportation circulation. We’ll talk about specific areas
474 of redevelopment that may be large, extra-large, or small, depending upon the site. It may focus
475 more on reinvestment. It may focus more on wholesale redevelopment. Those will vary in time,
476 money, and effort.”

477
478 Ald. Binash referred to the area that includes Kohl’s, and also to the area to the east that includes
479 Culver’s, B.A. Burrito, Starbucks, and Best Buy, and he told Bryan the developers and owners
480 are not speaking to one another. Ald. Binash noted the city could not obtain an easement or
481 roadway from Best Buy into Blain’s Farm & Fleet. Ald. Binash said, “I see what you’re getting
482 at in getting all the principal parties together to have a vision for what you want because if you
483 try to go to Starbucks and all those spaces are taken, it’s really hard to get around there,
484 especially around the holidays. There is a great deal of parking. It seems there is a lot of
485 opportunity to put things in there.” Ald. Binash noted Ground Round had closed over the
486 summer and that the building is available. Ald. Binash also noted Moka is located in the parking
487 lot near the former Ground Round site and has been successful. Ald. Binash said, “I agree there
488 needs to be a vision on development because right now you have problems where B.A. Burrito is
489 and Starbucks and drive-throughs, and getting from one place to another. If you can get
490 everybody to work together with a certain vision, you could really develop this area.”

491
492 Bryan said he hopes that the package of visuals, tools, and market findings will be the “sell” for

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493 people with the desire, energy and wherewithal to have those conversations with the property
494 owners. Bryan said the city can be present and assist in facilitating the dialogue, “but the private
495 sector is going to drive a lot of that.” Bryan said the city may provide additional financial
496 assistance and stated, “Those are opportunities that are in the future.”

497

498 John said he believes what happens to the properties adjacent to Valley View Mall, which has
499 experienced and is experiencing a number of store closures, is more important than determining
500 some of the uses that could go into the mall. John said, “If I say, ‘Here is the vision that could
501 tie into the Valley View Mall area,’ and then likewise here is what happens to the adjacent
502 pieces, we cast a vision for Valley View Mall that allows them to see, ‘Here’s what it can be on
503 our side of the street.’ ”

504

505 Bryan said he likes John’s suggestion and stated, “I think it’s that combination of, how do these
506 stitch together? There are limitations on Onalaska’s side, particularly just the two sides just to
507 the northwest with size, depth, and configuration. That may limit box size. It may direct it more
508 to different use types. How does the access, because that’s a tremendous amenity here? ... How
509 do users cross that highway, get through areas and get out here to make those sites more
510 desirable? How do you leverage all the assets in the corridor to make it happen?”

511

512 Katie said she believes the first bullet point – that retail is not dead – ties everything together.
513 Katie stated the area is a good area, and it is one that will transform. Katie noted the majority of
514 the people she and HKGi had spoken to had said that, and she said, “I think that conversation is
515 posing us to actually allow something like this to happen. Will it take time? Yes. Will it happen
516 next year? Probably not. But can we at least get the conversation started? I think everyone has
517 recognized that something needs to happen, and the timing of this is really great for the city to be
518 working on it.” Katie stated retailers “are not turning their back on this area. How can we
519 improve that and make sure it lasts?”

520

521 John referred to the number of stores that have closed or will be closing and said this is an
522 opportunity for the city. John said, “If we use that as our catalyst and say, ‘Now is the time to
523 really do something’ and we marshal the forces and look at some developers who aren’t here
524 locally like Trader Joe’s and say, ‘What do we bring to the table?’ ”

525

526 Ald. Olson noted the city already has a successful area and said that already is a positive. Ald.
527 Olson said, “If we diligently put this thing together properly, we’re really going to have
528 something.”

529

530 Bryan said some users might remain in their current location and renovate or reinvest, and he
531 stated, “Those can be the anchor components. But there are opportunities for higher and better
532 uses in each of those three quadrants. How do we work with the right pieces to make that fit?”

533

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534 Mike inquired about the area in which Best Buy is located and possible access across Interstate
535 90.

536

537 Bryan said he can zoom out the map and speak to Gundersen's point about crossing Interstate 90.

538

539 Mike said he believes it would be logical to construct an overpass for vehicles connecting to the
540 road.

541

542 Bryan said he will return for the CDA's October 10 meeting, at which time he would like to
543 discuss design alternatives for each location. Bryan also said he will attempt to meet with as
544 many property owners as possible during HKGi's next visit to the city, and also perhaps follow
545 up with some development groups.

546

547 Joe asked if homeowners have been approached and asked for their input regarding possible
548 construction in their neighborhood.

549

550 Katie said the level of public engagement had been discussed at the beginning of the project.
551 Katie also said, "It was focused more on private, where the city is meeting with the potentially
552 impacted property owners and not the potential redevelopment. If this is something the city can
553 do at the end of the project when we're approving the plan or getting close to it, we can invite the
554 public to come in and talk to them and have an open setting instead of a one-on-one basis."

555

556 Bryan said HKGi either has an open house component or is very clear in the narrative what a
557 diagram means.

558

559 **Adjournment**

560

561 Motion by Ann to adjourn.

562

563 Mike adjourned the meeting.

564

565

566 Recorded by:

567

568 Kirk Bey