



State Road 16 Corridor Redevelopment Study 2019



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- » Joe Bucheger, Vice Chair
- » John Lyche
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- » Ron Johnson
- » Jim Olson, Alderperson
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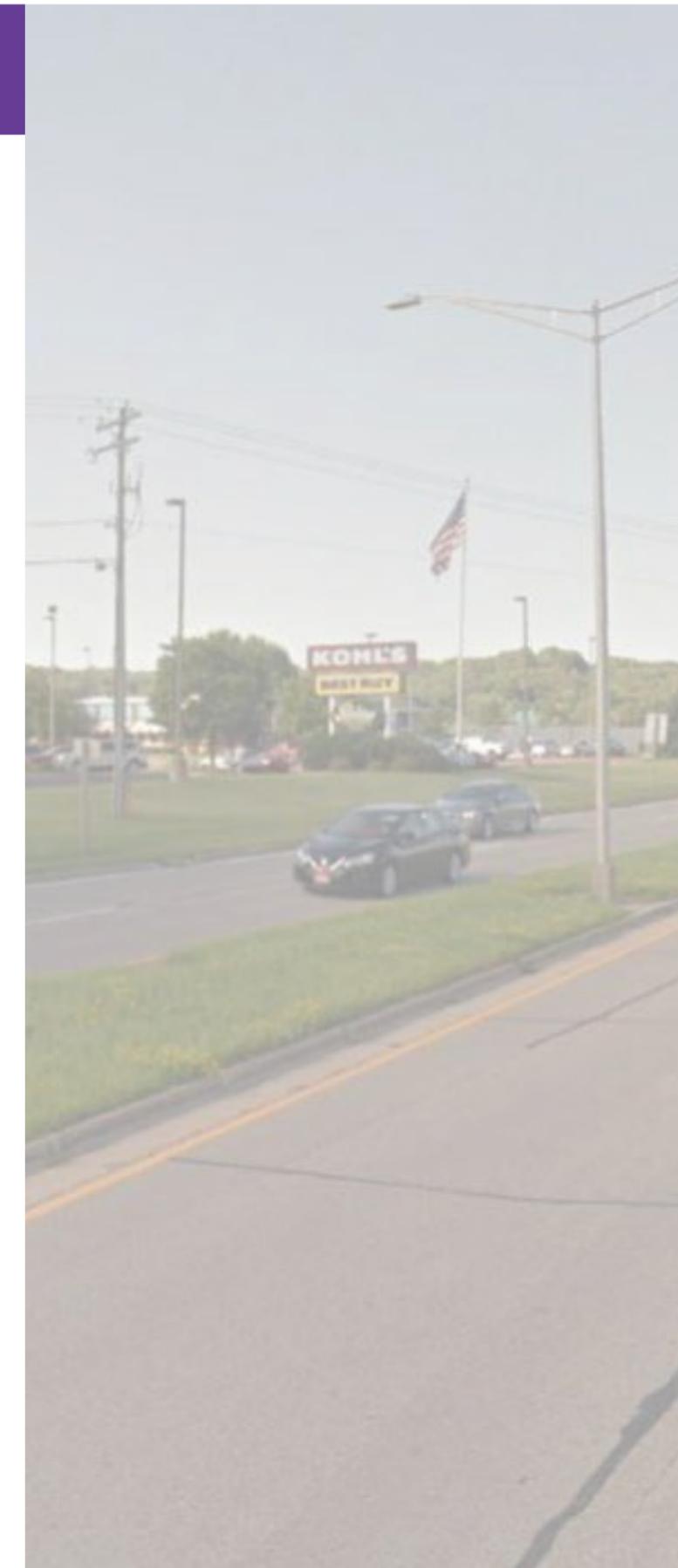
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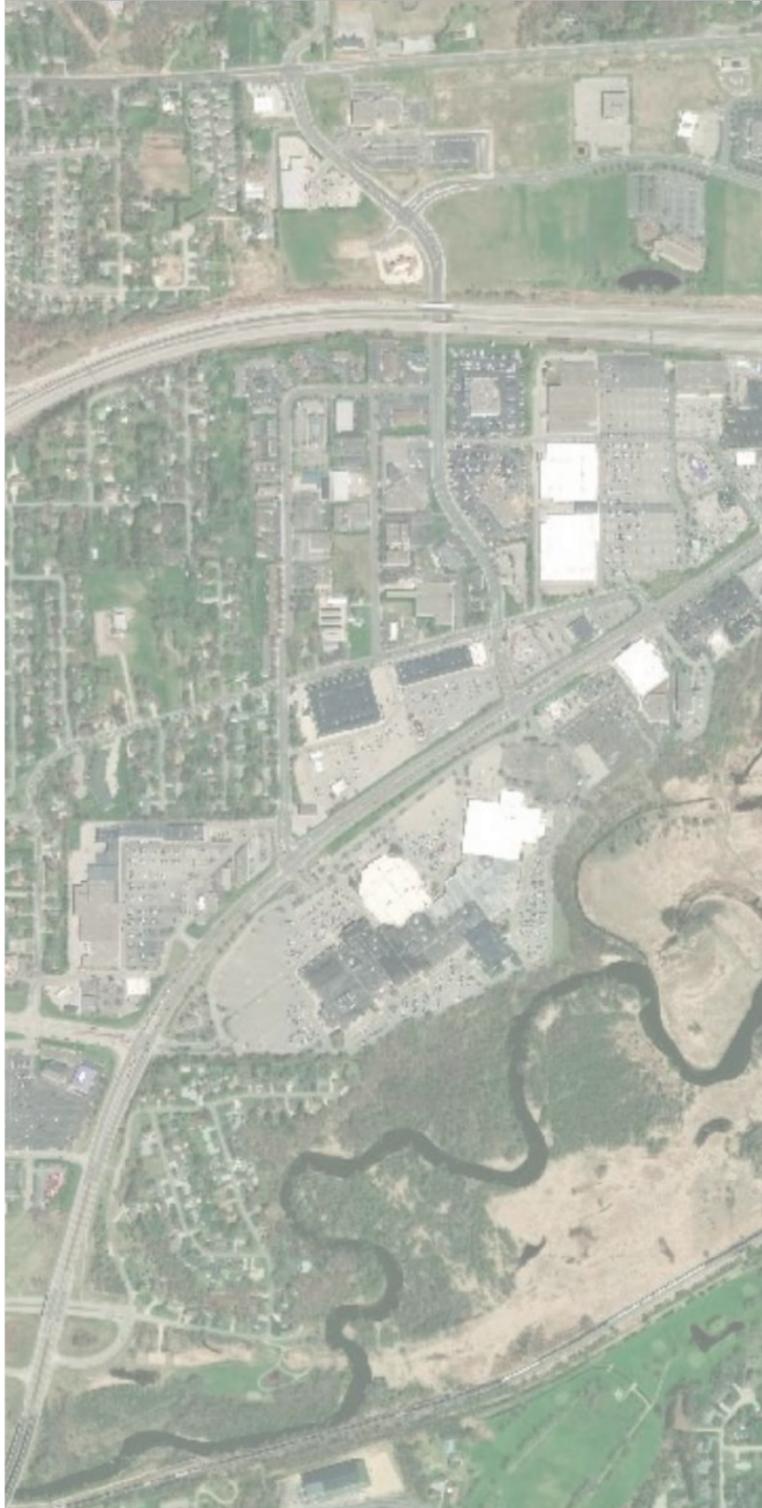
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Project Background



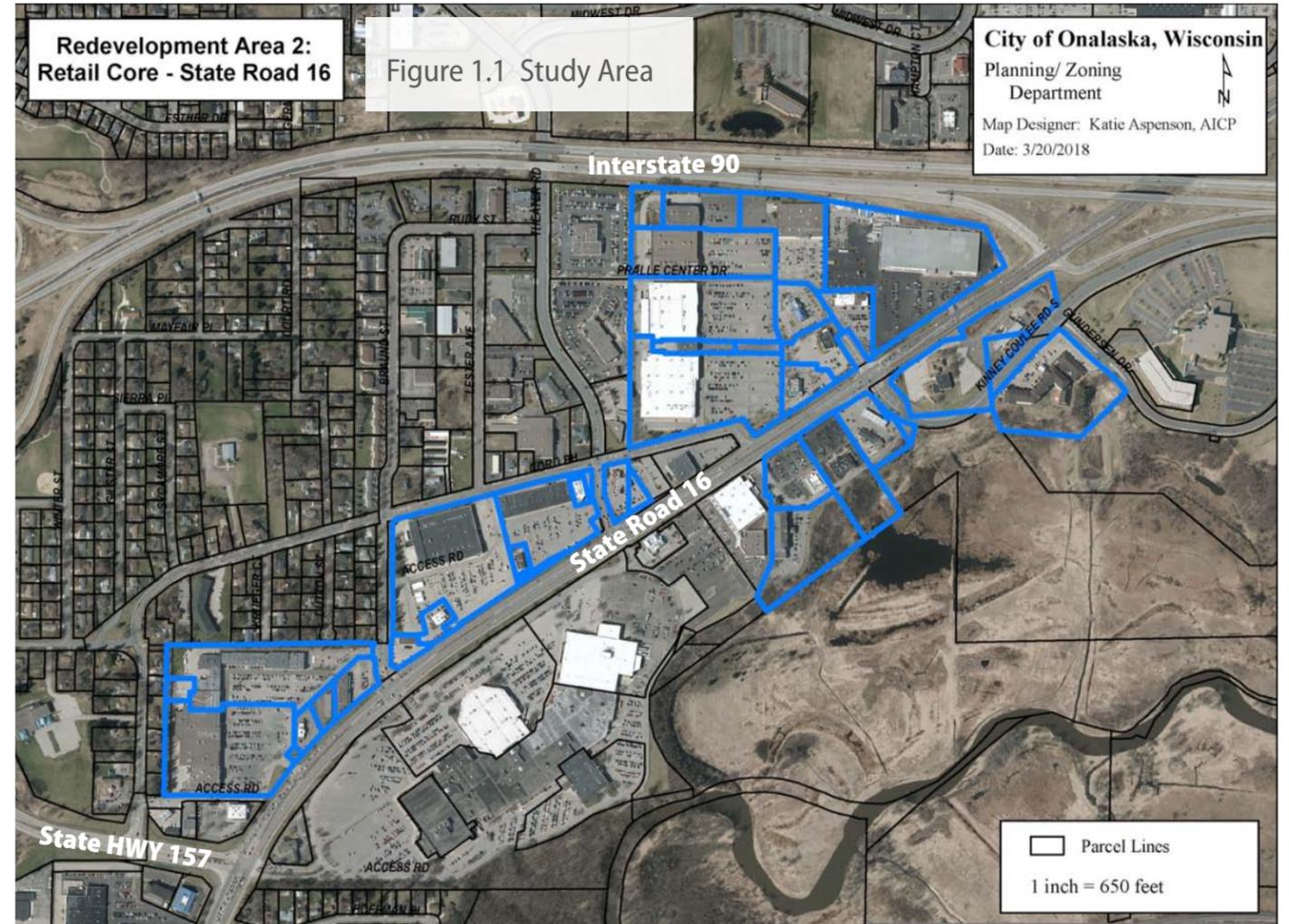
Purpose

In 2018, the Onalaska Community Development Authority (CDA) initiated a planning process to guide potential future redevelopment in the State Road 16 Corridor. The study area is generally defined by Interstate 90 to the north, the La Crosse River Conservancy lands and the City of La Crosse to the east and south, and the existing residential and employment areas to the northwest of County Road PH and Theater Road. Core objectives of the planning study were to examine the future of retail in the district, to better understand its long-term viability in the area and to be proactive in anticipation of an ever-changing retail climate.

Key to this objective was also to understand, and better anticipate the transition of the Valley View Mall, located in the City of La Crosse. This planning process will help lay the groundwork for an on-going partnership with the City of La Crosse to understand common goals for the State Road 16 Corridor, a major economic generator for the region.

Study Area

The study area (Figure 1.1) includes a complex set of sites, each with their own individual characteristics and redevelopment potential. In order to understand and address the many moving parts of the corridor, the planning team worked to evaluate and understand current and future market conditions, existing and potential land uses, transportation enhancements (vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian) and identify necessary parks and open space features. The outcome of this planning effort is an integrated set of recommendations that work in concert with one another outlining a logical evolution to allow continued success for the corridor.



The parcels highlighted in blue reflect the study area.



La Crosse River Conservancy Area, east of the study area.



The Valley View Mall In La Crosse, has recently seen major tenant closures.



Approach to the Planning Effort

The Onalaska CDA was involved throughout the planning process, including monthly meetings to review progress and guide the redevelopment planning. There were three primary tasks of the redevelopment planning effort:

1 Organize the Effort

This initial task involved assessing market conditions, existing physical conditions of the study area and conducting initial listening sessions with key stakeholders in the corridor.

2 Explore the Possibilities

This stage explored a range of concept alternatives for potential redevelopment, studied at precedent projects and included a second round of stakeholder listening sessions to gain feedback.

3 Develop a Preferred Plan and Seek Approvals

The final stage of the process brought the findings of the study together in a redevelopment study document, providing key recommendations, strategic implementation steps and discusses the funding tools to help support the desired redevelopment. A community meeting was also held for residents and business owners to provide comment on the recommendations. The conclusion of this task was the approval of the study by the CDA and City of Onalaska.



Prior Planning in the State Road 16 Corridor

Other Planning Efforts

Numerous other land use, transportation and pedestrian/ bicycle plans & studies have been completed in or around the project area. These documents have been reviewed to identify influencing factors in the State Road 16 Corridor Redevelopment Study, they include:

- » Onalaska Comprehensive Plan (2016)
- » Onalaska Central Greenway Plan (1999)
- » Coulee Vision – A Long-term plan for Growth & Transportation in the La Crosse Region (2015)
- » Economic Impact of Bicycling in La Crosse (2015)
- » Grand River Transit Service Enhancement and Policy Plan (2015)
- » Transportation Improvement Program 2019-2022



Transportation analysis from the Coulee Vision Plan shows crash rates above the statewide average.

? Key Questions for the Planning Process

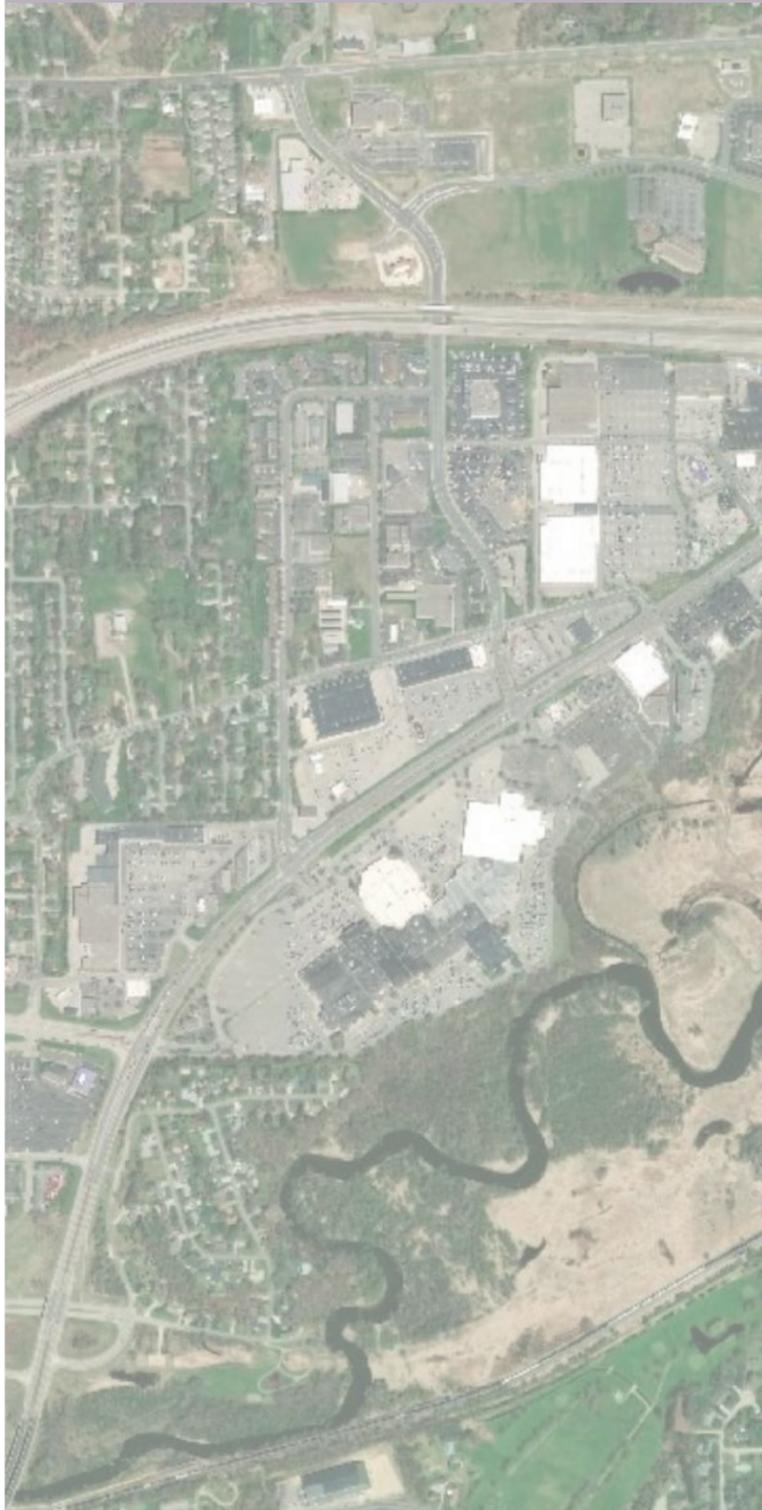
At the onset of the planning process, a number of key questions were asked and discussed with the CDA to help better understand the future vision of the State Road 16 Corridor. These questions included:

- » What is the future of the Valley View Mall? What role does the City of Onalaska play in guiding its future?
- » What should the appropriate future land uses in the corridor be? Should uses be diversified to include more residential or employment, or should this area remain a commercial corridor? What is the future of the traditional, bricks and mortar retail climate, in the face of a growing on-line retailing pressure?
- » What should the appropriate underlying zoning in the district be in the future? Currently this area is zoned Light Industrial (M-I) with a Planned Commercial Industrial District (PCID) overlay
- » What is the appropriate transition between uses?
- » What is the relationship to the uses north of Interstate 90? Do they complement or compete with this district?
- » How could access and circulation be better enhanced throughout the corridor?
 - Is there a plan for enhanced access management along State Road 16?
 - How could signalized intersections, and crossings of State Road 16 / I-90 be improved?
 - Can we better design internal site circulation?



Central Greenway Plan, City of Onalaska.

Existing Conditions



Land Use

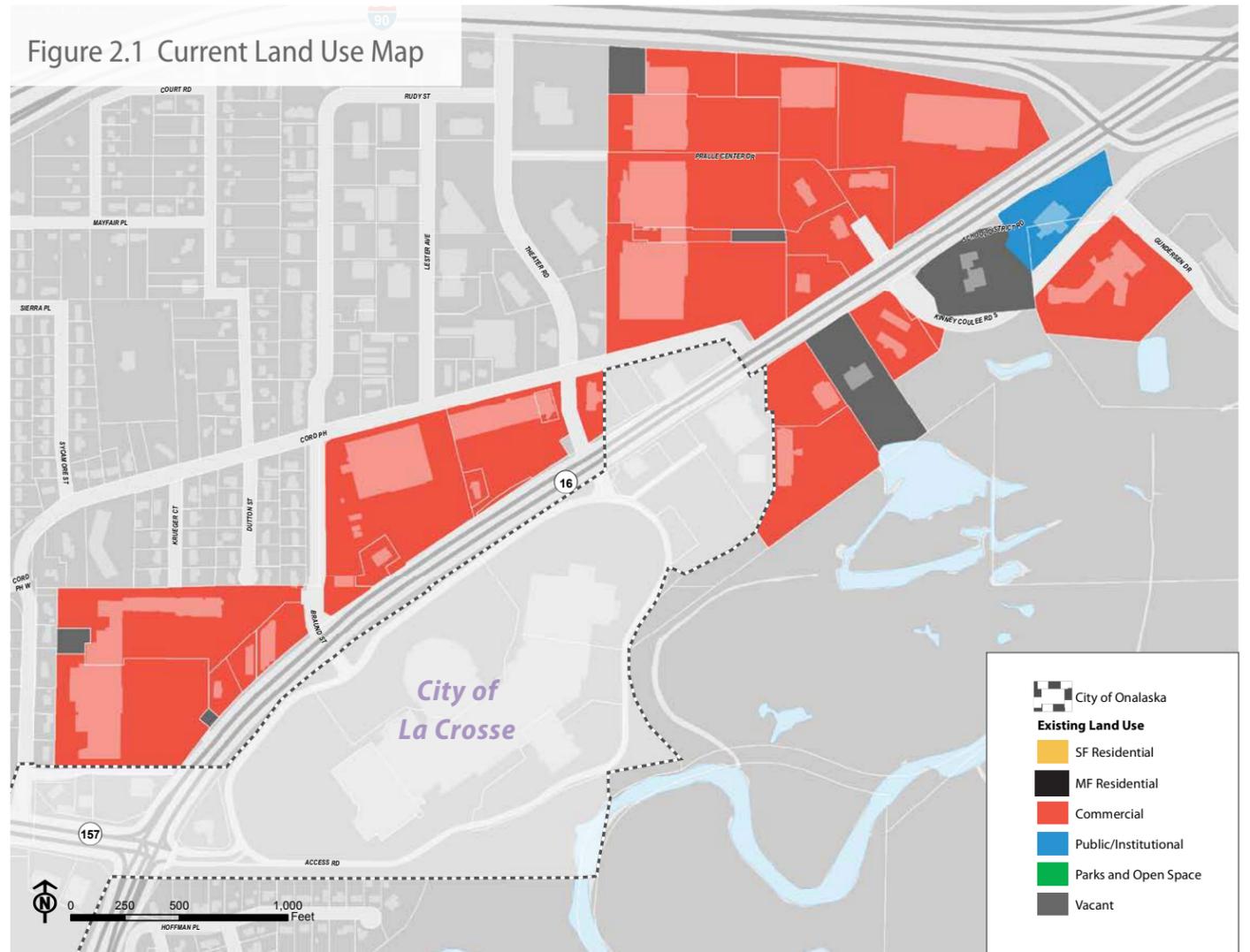
Figure 2.1 shows current land uses in the study area.

North of State Road 16

- » Entirely retail and restaurant uses, both freestanding buildings and multi-tenant strip commercial buildings, north of State Road 16
- » Four small scattered vacant sites that could accommodate building expansions or infill development

South of State Road 16

- » Retail, restaurant, and lodging uses
- » Medical use, renal dialysis center, adjacent to Gundersen Health's medical clinic
- » New vacant site owned by Gundersen Health, where Fauver Hill school building was demolished in 2018



Existing retail along State Road 16.

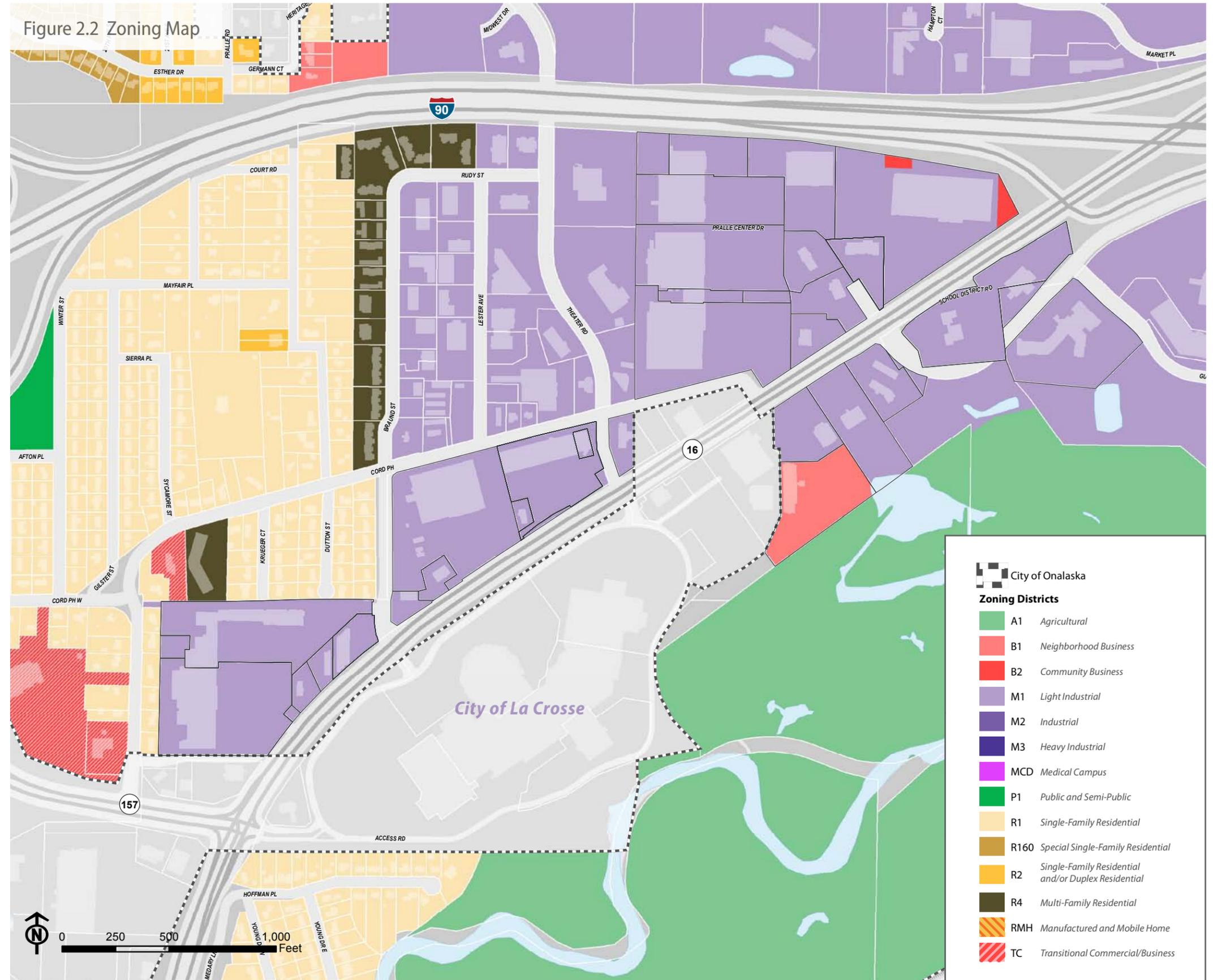


Existing retail along State Road 16.

Zoning

Figure 2.2 shows existing zoning in the study area.

- » Primarily Light Industrial (M1) with the exception of one hotel property that is zoned Community Business (B2)
- » All properties are also located within the Planned Commercial Industrial Development (PCID) overlay district.





Transportation

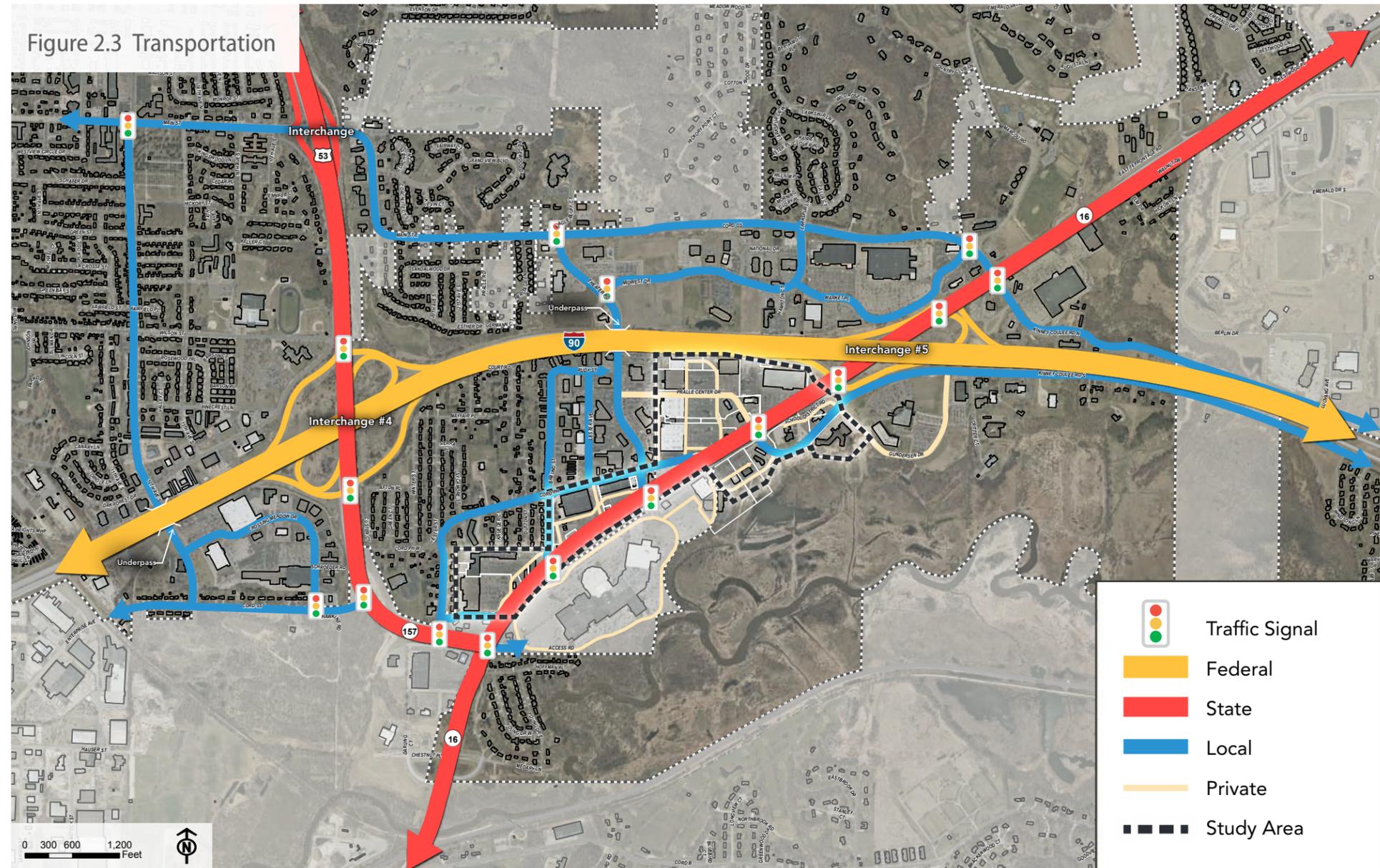
While this commercial corridor's location on a state roadway and interstate freeway grants it a high level of transportation access and traffic visibility, the corridor has a limited supporting transportation network. East-west roadway connections are limited to regional (state and federal) roadways – State Road 16 and I-90. North-south roadway connections are very limited due to the La Crosse River Conservancy Area to the south and the freeway corridor to the north; Theater Road is essentially the only connection to the north passing under I-90 and State Road 16 is the only connection to the south (Figure 2.3). Roadway functional classifications are as follows:

- » Principal Arterials – Interstate 90, State Road 16, State Road 157
- » Minor Arterials – Theater Road
- » Collectors – County Road PH, Braund Street, Kinney Coulee Road S
- » Local Streets – none
- » Private drives

The corridor's transportation circulation relies substantially on the private driveways linking commercial businesses to their parking lots and the limited public roadways.

Walking and biking facilities are limited as well. Sidewalks exist along both sides of the city's streets: Theater Road, County Road PH, and Braund Street with some gaps. Kinney Coulee Road S has a sidewalk along one side as well. On-street bike lanes exist on Theater Road, County Road PH, and Braund Street. An off-street bike/walk path exists along the south side of State Road 16 in La Crosse's portion of the corridor but not in the Onalaska portion. Walk/bike facilities are not provided along the private drives. Street crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists do not utilize high visibility techniques.

Transit is provided by the La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility (MTU). Routes 5 and 9 provide connections between the State Road 16 Corridor, La Crosse, and Onalaska. Bus stops are oriented to major retail businesses, including Valley View Mall, Shopko, Target, and Gundersen Medical Center.





Parks, Trails, and Open Space

While there are no parks or open spaces within the corridor, the area is located adjacent to the La Crosse River Conservancy Area. Two access points to the river valley's trails are located south of State Road 16 - Kinney Coulee Road. S next to Stoney Creek Hotel and Conference Center and on the private drive behind the restaurants west of Kinney Coulee Road. S (Figure 2.4).

Connections Beyond the Study Area

Onalaska Central Greenway Plan

The Onalaska Central Greenway Plan identifies key opportunities for conservancy areas, particularly the steep terrain common to the bluffs and the La Crosse River valley floodplain areas. The Onalaska Comprehensive Plan also supports this plan by calling out specific locations for park and open space lands within rapidly growing areas of the City and identifies goals to provide, improve, and enhance public access, use and enjoyment of the community's natural and recreational resources, and to provide an efficient and well planned system of pathways that will encourage greater pedestrian and bicycle use for recreation and transportation purposes.

La Crosse River Conservancy Area

The La Crosse River Conservancy Area was conceived through a cooperative partnership between the Mississippi Valley Conservancy, the cities of Onalaska and La Crosse, and Gundersen Clinic. Key objectives of the plan included the phased acquisition of portions of the La Crosse River floodplain either through direct purchase or through the establishment of permanent conservation easements.

The La Crosse River Conservancy Area contains over 1,000 acres of floodplain, wetland, wooded areas and the La Crosse River itself. The project proposes the future development of nature based recreation and education facilities through access by several local

public park sites including Robinson Park Valley View Park and Holiday Heights Park. Trails, bird watching platforms, river access points and interpretive areas are part of the master plan for the area. Plans for habitat restoration are also part of the plans for the conservancy project. The conservancy area is largely inaccessible currently although spectacular views of the area can be found at several locations north and south of the floodplain.

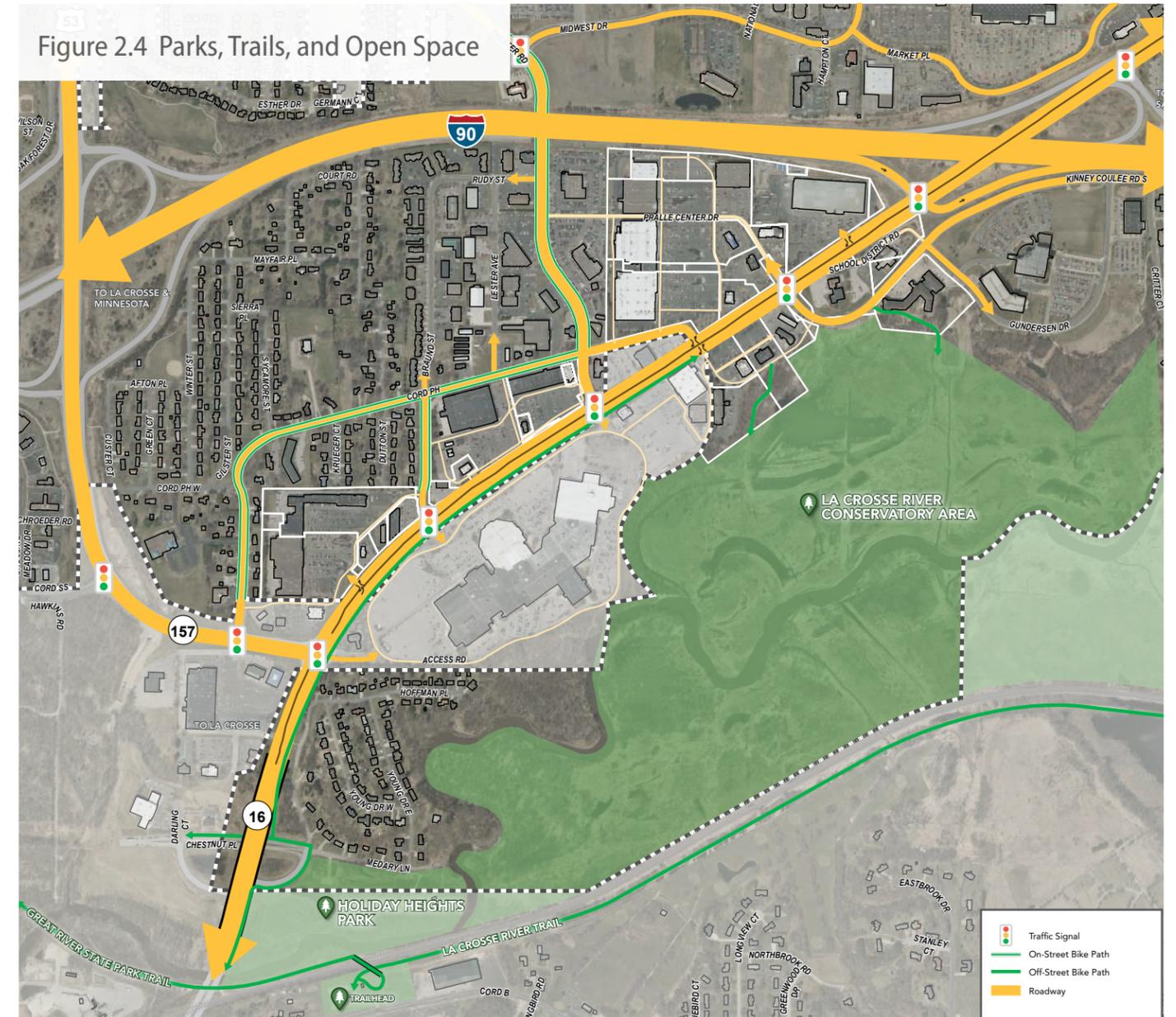
Holiday Heights Park

Holiday Heights Park is a 22-acre park located between the cities of Onalaska and La Crosse adjacent to the Holiday Heights subdivision. The park is primarily located in the La Crosse River floodplain, offering key wildlife viewing, fishing, and hiking opportunities. The park has a playground, nature trails along the river, an accessible fishing and canoe launch area, a shelter, and restroom facilities. The park also contains a potential linkage to the La Crosse River Conservancy Area to the east by way of a bridge over the La Crosse River. The park also lies across the river from the La Crosse River State Trail trailhead at County Road B in La Crosse, presenting another opportunity for a potential linkage to the State Trail system. A trail connection to the La Crosse River State Trail would require a bridge over the La Crosse River from the north. Both the La Crosse River Conservancy Project and the Onalaska Central Greenway Plan note the possibility of this type of connection.

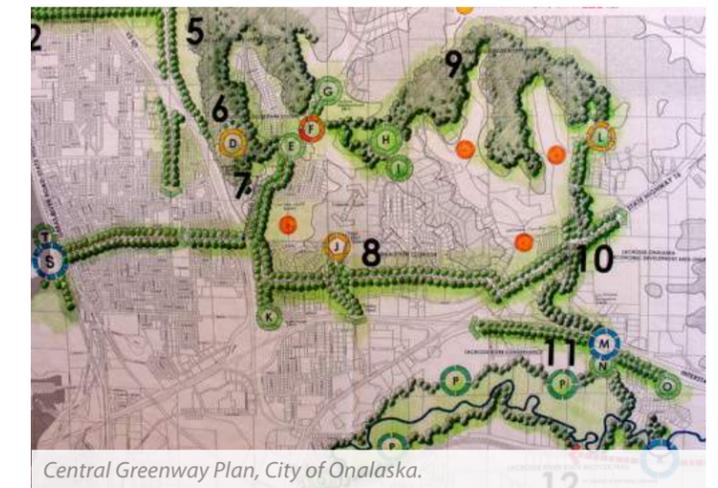
Crossing Interstate 90

The Central Greenway Plan also identifies a needed trail connection across Interstate 90. This would likely require an overpass or underpass depending on location. Initial identification places this connection near the drainage crossing indicating an underpass, however other locations should be explored.

Figure 2.4 Parks, Trails, and Open Space



La Crosse River Conservancy Area.



Central Greenway Plan, City of Onalaska.



Redevelopment Scoring

In addition to examining previous planning efforts, it was necessary to evaluate property within the corridor for redevelopment potential. By finding the “low hanging fruit” it was possible to identify locations that make sense as starting points for potential redevelopment.

Part of the process for identifying priority sites (Figure 2.9) was an attribute-based evaluation of the properties within the study area. By assigning points based on characteristics of all of the parcels, the consultant team was able to get an initial view of where to focus redevelopment efforts. These characteristics included vacancy, age, land and building values, land use, size, ownership, location and visibility (Figures 2.5-2.8). This evaluation produced an initial framework to begin identifying redevelopment parcels.

Because the redevelopment scoring model could not take every variable into account, and because different redevelopment types have different needs, further analysis was conducted on a case-by-case basis, examining the physical characteristics, market realities, and other redevelopment demands of individual and combined sites.

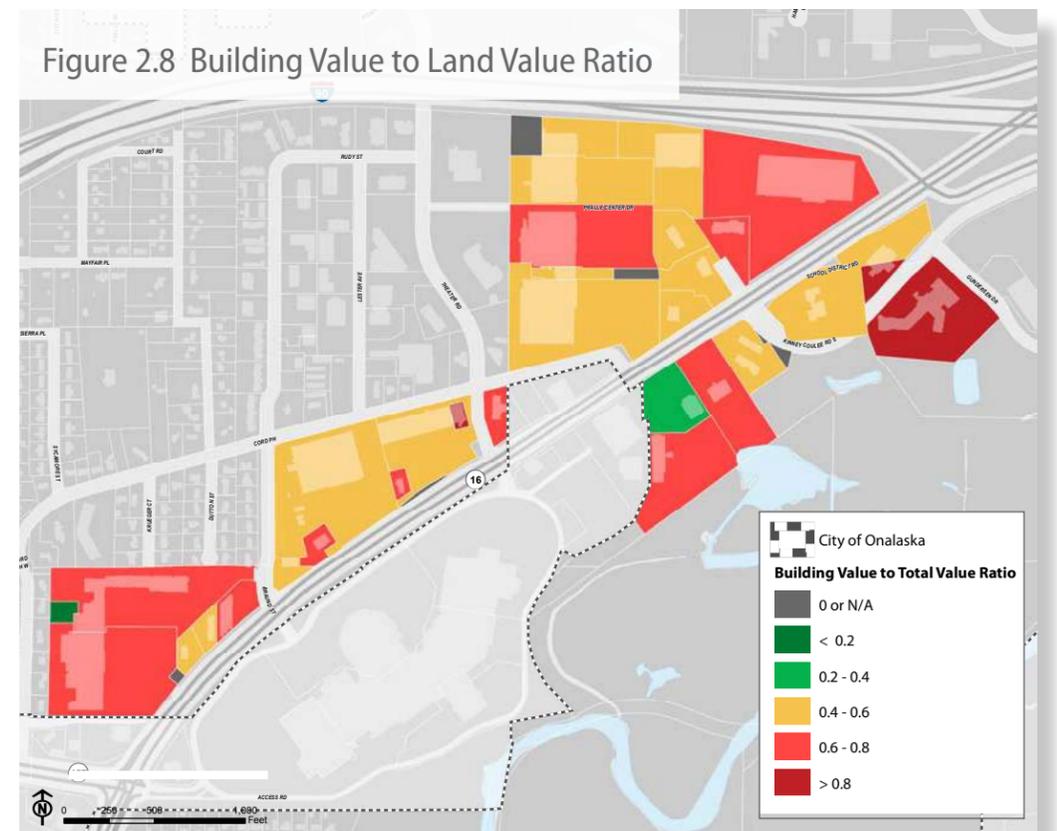
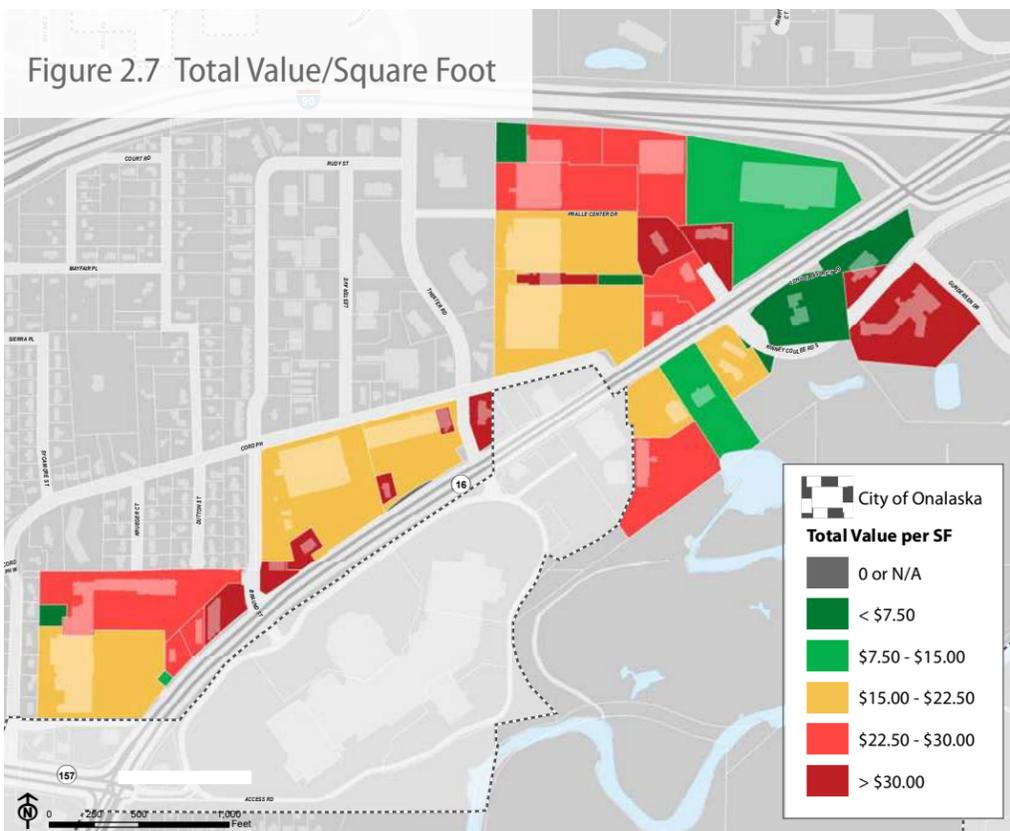
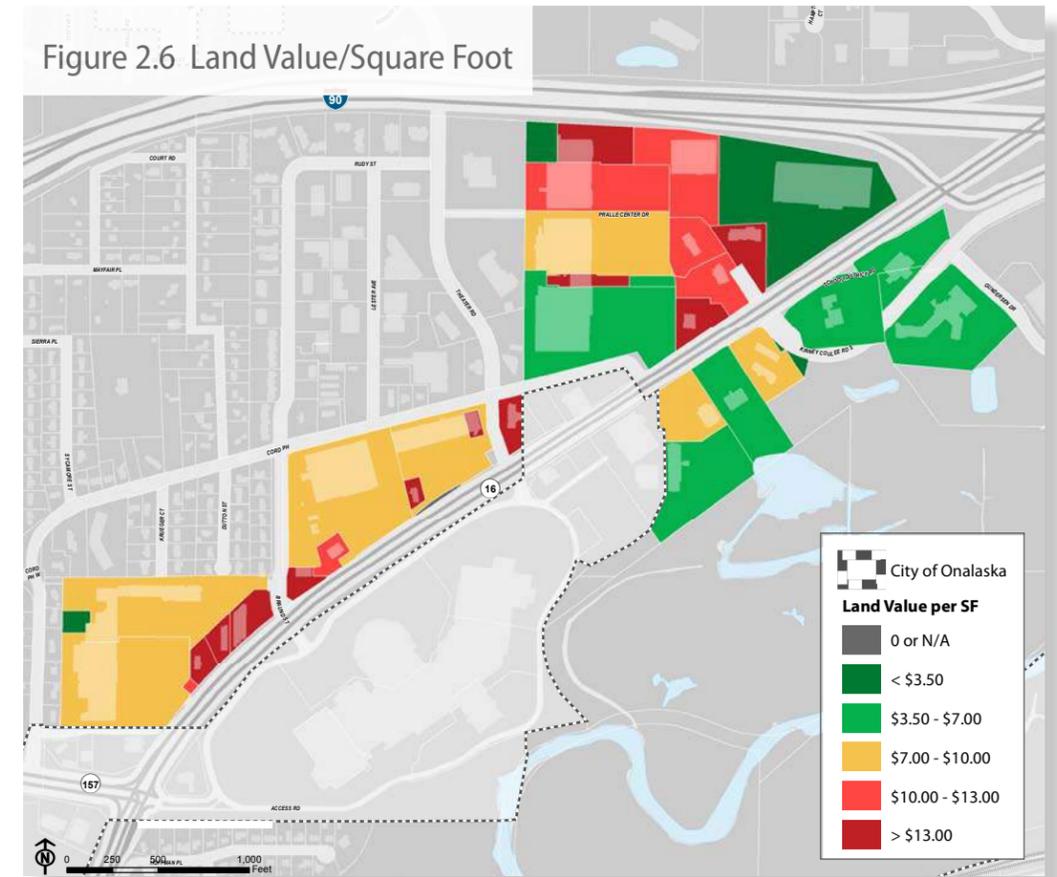
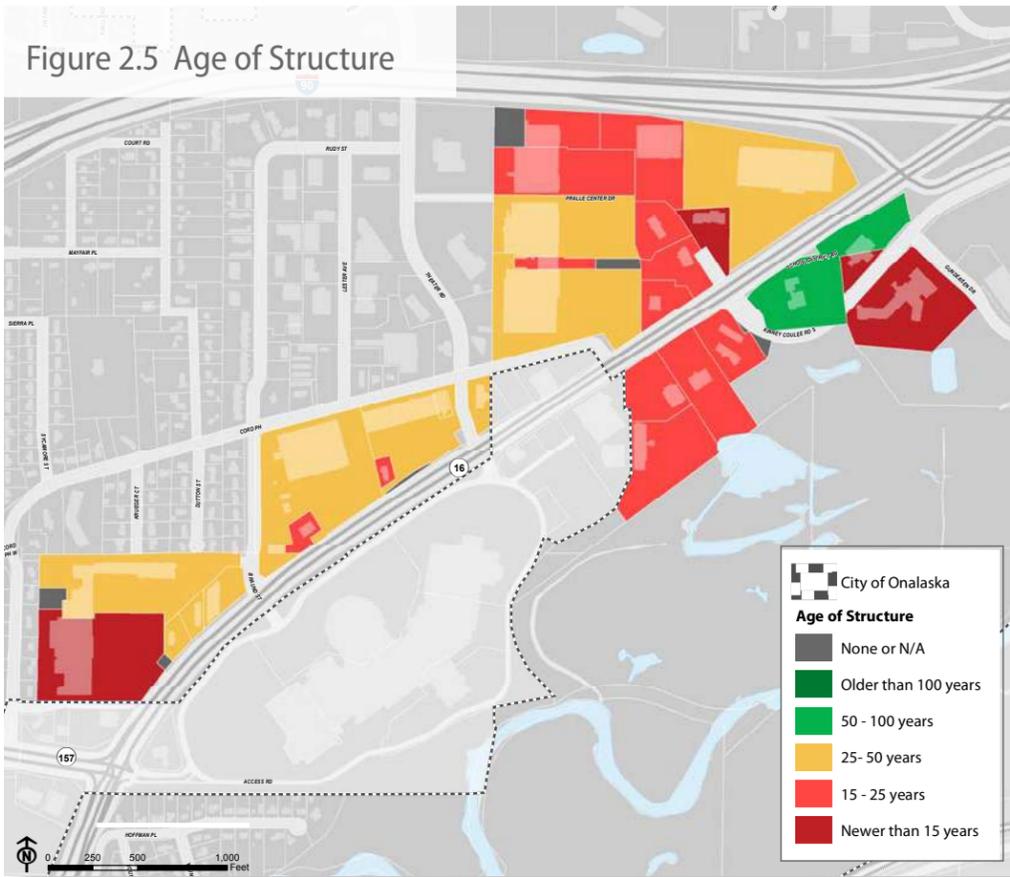
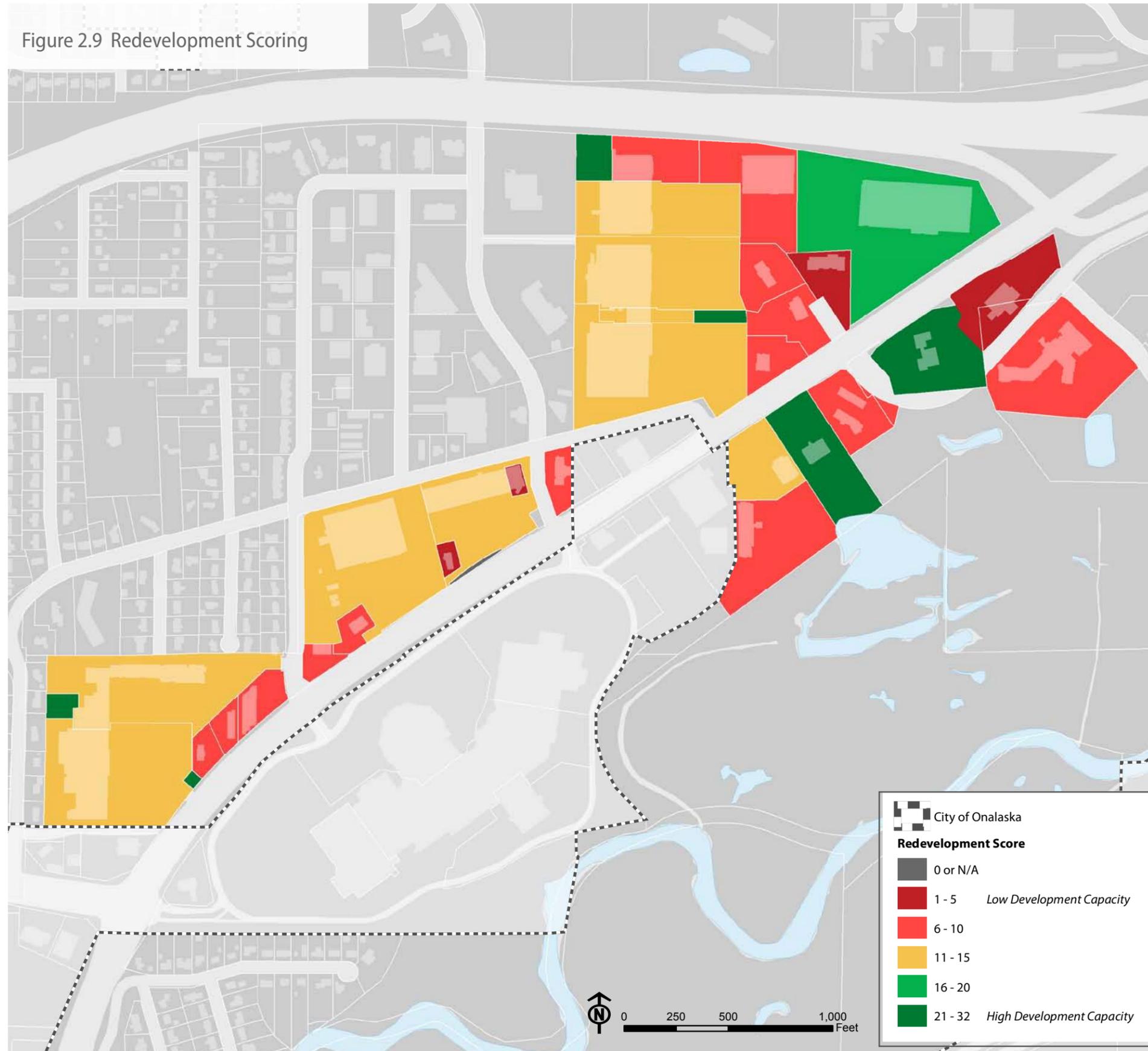


Figure 2.9 Redevelopment Scoring



Redevelopment Scoring

This map shows the redevelopment potential as identified by scoring a number of variables for each parcel. This information should be considered as a baseline to start identifying potential redevelopment parcels, but should not be considered as definitive. The model cannot take everything into account and sites should be checked against ground conditions. (For example, some publicly owned parcels are missing information such as building improvement value.)

Vacant:

No.....	0
Yes	20

Age:

Over 100 yrs.....	1
50 - 100 yrs.....	5
25 - 50 yrs.....	3
15 - 25 yrs.....	1
Less than 15 yrs.....	0

Land Value \$ / Square Foot:

< 3.5.....	4
3.5 - 7.....	3
7 - 10.....	2
10 - 13.....	1
>13.....	0

Total Value \$ /Square Foot:

< 7.5.....	4
7.5 - 15.....	3
15 - 22.5.....	2
22.5 - 30.....	1
> 30.....	0

Building Value to Land Value Ratio:

< 1.0.....	4
1.0 - 2.0.....	3
2.0 - 3.0.....	2
3.0 - 6.0.....	1
> 6.0.....	0

Building Value to Total Value Ratio:

< 0.2.....	4
0.2 - 0.4.....	3
0.4 - 0.6.....	2
0.6 - 0.8.....	1
> 0.8.....	0

Parking Oversupply:

> 50 spaces.....	3
21 - 49 spaces.....	2
1 - 20 spaces.....	1
< 0 spaces.....	0

Parcel Size:

> 5 ac.....	4
2 - 5 ac.....	3
1 - 2 ac.....	1
< 1 ac.....	0

City Ownership:

Owned by Onalaska.....	5
Not owned by Onalaska.....	0





Market Summary

The strength of the State Road 16 Corridor comes from being the premier retail location within the region, driven by its proximity to

the access and traffic counts of Interstate 90. This strategic location has allowed the area to develop as a regional shopping destination. In turn, this growth strengthens the “cluster” destination mentality of retailers, further strengthening the corridor as a whole. This can also result in the increase of local competition.

Challenges or potential vulnerabilities facing this area will be:

- » The continued growth of e-shopping;
- » What happens with the La Crosse side of the State Road 16 corridor (Valley View Mall);
- » Changing spending habits.

The City benefits from positive perceptions of the community as a desired place to live, strong schools, and a good location relative to the City of La Crosse.

Market Area

The primary State Road 16 market can be defined by the 15, 30 and 45 minute drive time map shown in Figure 2.10.

The 45 minute drive time helps define the market area for larger purchases or shopping trips, consistent with the larger general merchandise retailers that are in the area. This market encompasses over a quarter of a million people and reaches Tomah to the east, Winona to the northwest, and the Iowa border to the south.

Smaller retailers (typically convenience and fast food) benefit from the proximity and higher traffic counts that come with being proximate to regional shopping destinations, but may also draw customers on their own from shorter, more immediately local distances.

Figure 2.11 shows an equidistant line between the La Crosse/Onalaska area and other cities with populations over 35,000. These include Rochester,

Eau Claire, Wausau, Madison, Dubuque, IA, and Waterloo, IA.

Potential customers in this area will be deciding between these regional centers for larger goods and service shopping.

Market for Retail Space

Based on location, traffic counts, and the strength of the retail cluster, the market is outperforming La Crosse and Holmen by a significant margin. Vacancy rates in Onalaska and across the region are up slightly above the 5 year average, but remain remarkably low compared with the nation as a whole which sits at around 10%.

Rent Rates

Onalaska rents trail national asking rates (\$21/square foot) slightly, but are over twice the asking rate for both La Crosse and Holmen, indicating a strong commercial/retail presence.

	Onalaska	La Crosse	Holmen
Retail Vacancy Rate	2.5%	3.4%	5.2%
5 Year Average	1.3%	2.6%	7.3%

	Onalaska	La Crosse	Holmen
Triple Net Lease Rent \$/SF (asking)	\$18.60	\$9.09	\$7.59
5 Year Average	\$15.15	\$9.86	\$7.70

Figure 2.10 Drive Time

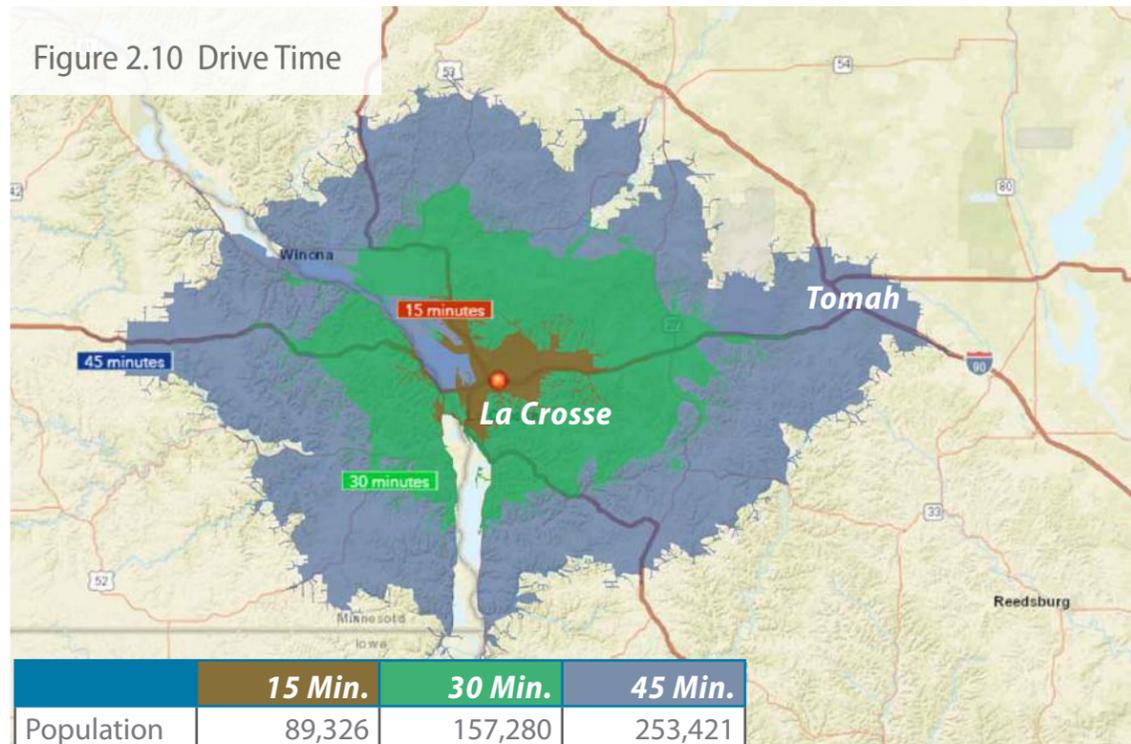


Figure 2.11 Regional Centers

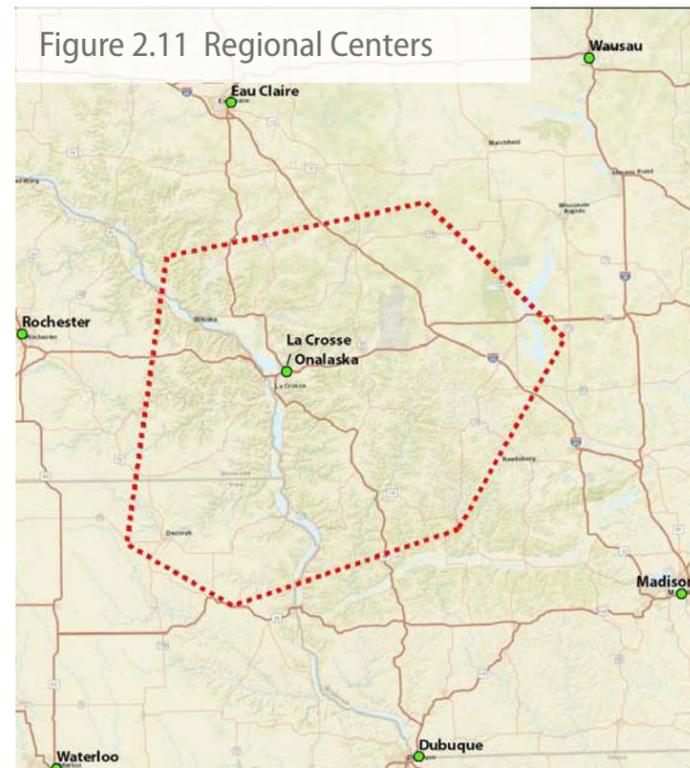
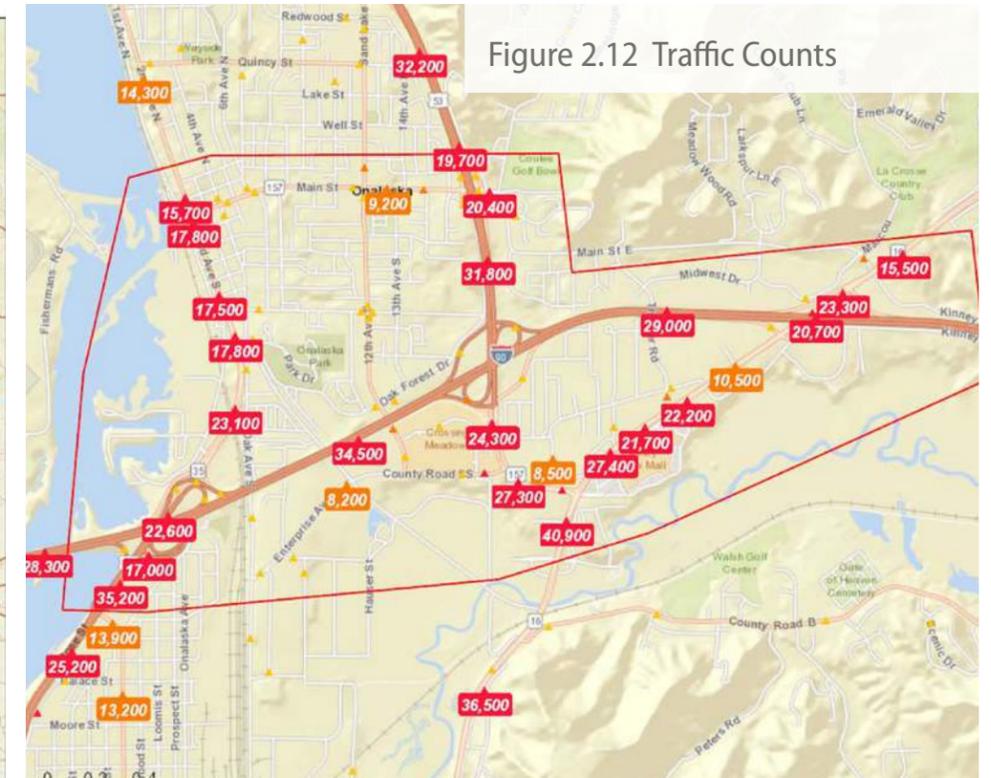


Figure 2.12 Traffic Counts



Gap Analysis

A gap analysis looks at the amount of spending that would be expected in an area based on population and population characteristics. It is then compared to the amount of spending that actually occurs in the same geographic area. If the gap is positive, it means spending is coming into the community. If it is negative, spending is leaving the community.

The gap analysis of Onalaska shows an incredibly strong retail destination. In almost every retail category, the spending in the city outpaces what would be expected based solely on the population.

The implications of the leakage/surplus analysis suggest two things: retail is strong in Onalaska, but

there may not be much unmet demand in the city (opportunities for new retail). Based on sales data, new retailers will likely have to identify specific needs, carve out a niche market, or out-compete existing businesses.

With the exception of e-commerce and vending (which is centered nationally around a very few set of cities) the businesses categories that are not meeting local demand within the city are:

- » Motor vehicle sales & parts
- » Gasoline stations

Neither one is completely absent in the community and both have implications for the urban design and

appearance of a community with regards to open street frontages, intense lighting, traffic generation, and potential sources of contamination.

Market Driven Design Requirements

Businesses in the State Road 16 corridor rely on high visibility and convenient access. The district is auto-centric and draws from a large surrounding market area. Paying close attention to parking and automobile circulation is key to the success of a number of businesses in the corridor.

Key Takeaways on the State Road 16 Market Conditions:

- » Exceptionally strong retail capture rate for the surrounding region.
- » Draws net outside spending in nearly every retail category.
- » Best retail location in La Crosse Region from a highway/access perspective at intersection of I-90 and US-53.
- » Low vacancy rates and rising rents (over 2x the average asking rent for retail space in La Crosse or Holmen) point to the strength of this area.
- » Differences in visibility, circulation, and access make some parcels more attractive for retailing than others.
- » Regional retail “cluster” strengthens the total retail draw of the area, and makes the area more resilient, but can mean increased local competition.
- » This area will be impacted by changes at the Valley View Mall.
- » The study area may be vulnerable to changing spending habits and e-shopping, but this has more to do with retail in general than this area in particular.

	Local				Market Capture Rate		
	Demand	Sales	Difference	%	15 Min.	30 Min.	45 Min.
General Merchandise Stores (452)	\$45,776,857	\$111,264,074	\$65,487,217	243.10%	60.6%	32.8%	20.9%
Food Services & Drinking Places (722)	\$27,858,336	\$54,115,504	\$26,257,168	194.30%	48.5%	26.5%	17.2%
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores (444)	\$17,649,185	\$41,714,826	\$24,065,641	236.40%	59.3%	31.0%	19.0%
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores (448)	\$11,233,512	\$27,467,948	\$16,234,436	244.50%	60.5%	33.0%	21.0%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores (451)	\$6,672,829	\$21,932,701	\$15,259,872	328.70%	81.1%	43.8%	27.4%
Health & Personal Care Stores (446,4461)	\$16,317,667	\$30,134,365	\$13,816,698	184.70%	45.9%	24.3%	14.9%
Electronics & Appliance Stores (443)	\$8,555,885	\$20,167,473	\$11,611,588	235.70%	58.4%	31.7%	20.1%
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores (442)	\$8,437,406	\$13,847,768	\$5,410,362	164.10%	41.2%	22.4%	14.6%
Food & Beverage Stores (445)	\$40,047,124	\$43,817,994	\$3,770,870	109.40%	27.2%	14.6%	9.2%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers (453)	\$10,046,180	\$11,692,054	\$1,645,874	116.40%	29.0%	15.5%	9.6%
Nonstore Retailers (454) E-shopping, Vending	\$7,490,885	\$715,505	\$-6,775,380	9.60%	2.5%	1.3%	0.9%
Gasoline Stations (447,4471)	\$30,332,092	\$18,285,164	\$-12,046,928	60.30%	14.9%	8.0%	5.0%
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers (441)	\$55,176,616	\$32,962,142	\$-22,214,474	59.70%	14.9%	7.9%	4.9%
Expected rate based on population (any rate above the expected rate suggests net inflow of \$)					21.1%	12.0%	7.4%



Corridor Challenges & Opportunities

Through conversations with the CDA and key stakeholders in the corridor a number of challenges and opportunities were discussed regarding redevelopment. The following provides a summary of the key challenges and opportunities discussed (Figure 2.13). Additional information can be found in the stakeholder input section as well.

Corridor Challenges

- » Development/ Redevelopment
 - *Triangular shape of parcels creates inefficiencies in development*
 - *Multiple property owners make assembly difficult*
 - *Cross-access agreements can put limitations on redevelopment opportunities*
 - *Signage and visibility requirements in lease agreements can hinder redevelopment*
- » Transportation
 - *A number of intersections experience heavy congestion, even high crash rates*
 - *The area is served well by the State Road, but has a limited supporting public roadway network and relies heavily on private drives for development*
- » Parks, Trails and Open Space
 - *Limited park and open space features exist in the corridor, essentially only views of the La Crosse River Conservancy*
 - *Trail connections are incomplete*

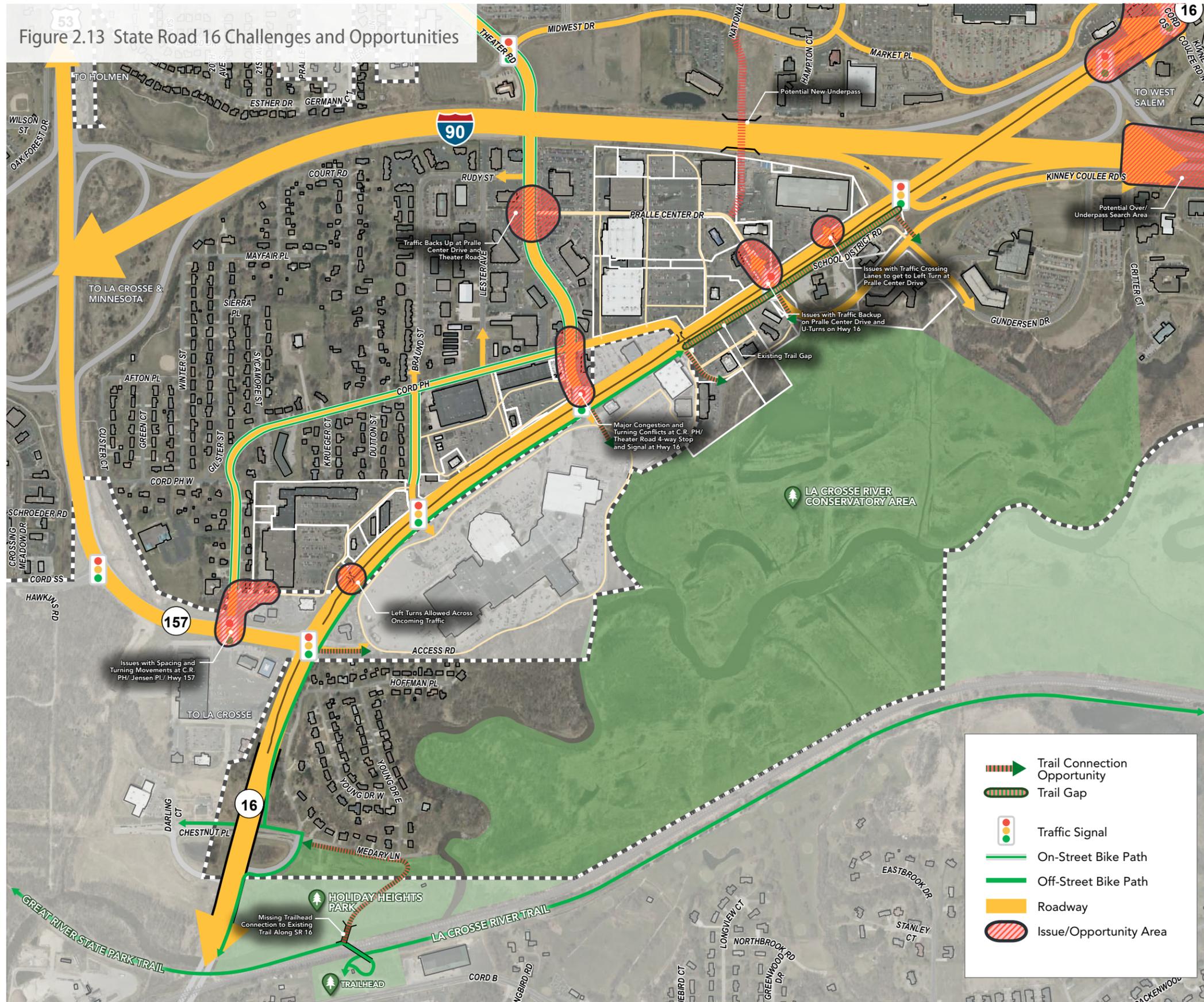
Corridor Opportunities

- » Development/ Redevelopment
 - *Over-parked surface parking lots provide an opportunity for infill development*
 - *Creation of unique shopping, dining and entertainment environments*
 - *Mixed use and high density housing*
- » Transportation
 - *Increase stacking distance to signalized intersections at State Road 16*
 - *Interconnect developments with public streets or enhanced private drives*
 - *Enhance streetscapes*
- » Parks, Trails and Open Space
 - *Complete a pedestrian and trail network to enhance connectivity*
 - *Additional connections across I-90*
 - *Create activated, programmed park spaces with redevelopment to provide an enhanced amenity*

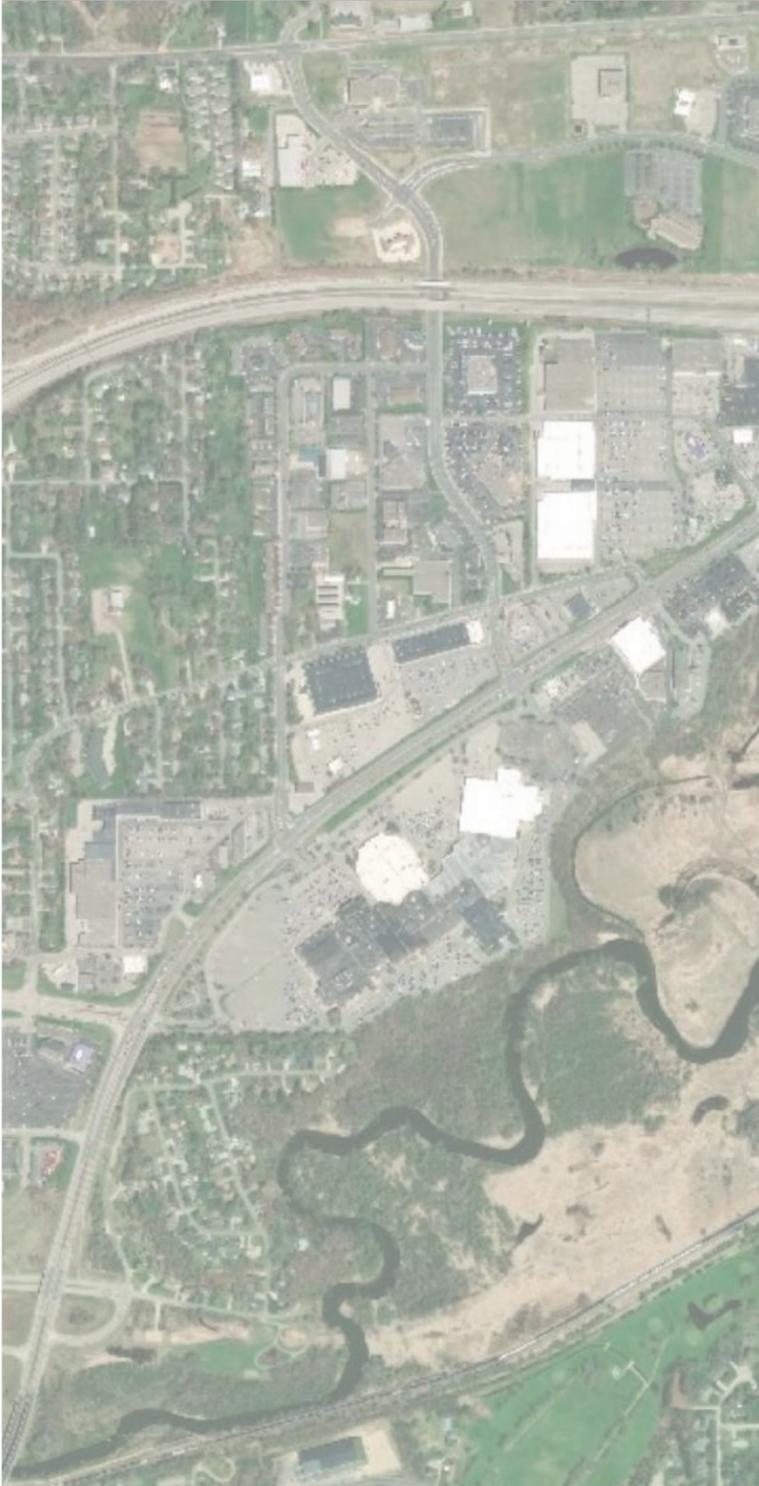


Connections (visual and physical) to the La Crosse River Conservancy Area should be explored.

Figure 2.13 State Road 16 Challenges and Opportunities



Stakeholder & Community Input



Initial 2018 Stakeholder Input

As part of the planning process, the consultant team and city staff conducted two rounds of stakeholder interviews in 2018 with key property and business owners in the State Road 16 Corridor. Initial discussions centered on the issues these stakeholders see in the corridor today and what opportunities are possible in the future. The following summarizes these initial conversations in August 2018:

- » Most of the current property owners have had a long-term commitment to this retail corridor, remain confident in its future as a retail corridor, and expressed an openness to adjusting to retail's continuing evolution.
- » Retail tenants generally seem to be interested in downsizing their sq. footages, e.g. Best Buy, Shopko, Kohl's, smaller retailers. Impacts of this trend could be oversized buildings, single-tenant buildings becoming multi-tenant, and relocations.
- » The corridor is generally over-parked; a reduction to smaller buildings/spaces in the city's minimum parking quantity requirements (currently 6.7 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft.) could improve this situation and open up land for infill development opportunities.
- » Roadway circulation and access concerns. Potential improvements identified include redesign Theater Road/County Road PH intersection, add eastern connection to Kinney Coulee Road South, convert Pralle Center Drive to a public street, State Road 16 reconstruction, roundabouts, and reduce cut-through traffic in parking areas.
- » Opportunities for the city to be more of a partner than a roadblock, e.g. reduce excessive parking requirements, improve roadway circulation/traffic issues, reduce requirements tied to property improvement projects (stormwater, landscaping).
- » The corridor's constrained size due to the bluffs and river valley limits the potential for retail expansion; some feel that the area does not have too much retail space and could attract additional retail businesses if there was expansion space.

- » Some infill/redevelopment opportunities include older oversized buildings, potential outlots along roadways, oversized parking lots.
- » Some infill/redevelopment challenges include cross access agreements, store sightline preservation requirements, lack of shared parking.
- » Interest in adding new development types to the corridor, e.g. co-working space, addition of retail store pick-up facilities, housing, entertainment, experience-based retail, personal service businesses that function more like retail (clinic, dentist, fitness).
- » Area is not pedestrian- and bike-friendly; limited pedestrian paths, trails, bike routes.
- » Major employment corridor, particularly with Gundersen Health campus, so corridor could cater more to employee-oriented businesses, amenities, and connectivity, e.g. convenient lunch restaurants.
- » Consider a TIF district as an incentive for reinvestment/redevelopment.
- » Potential for partnering with the City of La Crosse and the Valley View Mall on planning and redevelopment along both sides of State Road 16, creating a gateway for both cities and targeting mixed-use development.



Previous location of the Old Country Buffet building.



Existing retail along State Road 16.



While some traces exist, there is a lack of connected pedestrian and bike network facilities.





Follow-up 2018 Stakeholder Input

A second round of listening sessions was conducted with the key stakeholders in the State Road 16 Corridor after redevelopment concept alternatives were created. The concepts explored new site redevelopment and roadway configurations. The following comments are from the second round of stakeholder meetings in November 2018:

Existing Traffic Concerns

- » High cut-through traffic, high speed traffic and congestion in the corridor.
- » Traffic data needs including the specific data for traffic counts, congestion/length of backups, traffic signals at-capacity, fatalities, etc.
- » Vehicle circulation challenges in the State Road 16/Theater Road/I-90 triangle including:
 - *The Pralle Center Drive public road right-of-way only extends a short distance from the State Road 16 intersection*
 - *Access to Pralle Center businesses and Marsh View Center businesses but no public roadway connection between these two retail centers and Farm & Fleet.*
 - *Pralle Center Drive is being used by cut-through traffic avoiding congestion on Theater Road and State Road 16, such as Gundersen Health employees/patients. Pralle Center property owner has safety concerns about this private circulation drive being used as a public through street.*
 - *Blocking off of Pralle Center Drive by the property owner at times, which only worsens traffic on State Road 16 and Theater Road.*

New Public Roadways

- » Interest in adding public roadway(s) but it would be important to identify what value and who values from any new public roadways, e.g. north-south underpass of I-90, conversion of private Pralle Center Drive to a public roadway.

New East-West Backage Roadways

- » Some support for developing an east-west backage road on the north side of State Road 16 in conjunction with targeted redevelopment along State Road 16; skeptical that a backage road

on the south side of State Road 16 is feasible due to the adjacent river valley ridge.

Excess Parking

- » Interest in reduction in the city's zoning code requirements for minimum number of parking spaces.

Redevelopment Interest

- » Seems to be greater for sites closer to State Road 16 and smaller sites rather than the larger retail buildings further from State Road 16. For example, TGIF's lease is expiring in two years, infill of excessive surface parking lots, East Town Plaza impacts from Theater Road improvements, redevelopment tied to creating a new east-west backage road.

Redevelopment Skepticism

- » Concern that market for mixed use or multi-family residential redevelopment may not be realistic in a smaller and lower density market like Onalaska; recommend looking for redevelopment precedents in comparable metro areas rather than large metro areas. Due to existing traffic issues, seems like it could be difficult to add development and go vertical with redevelopment.

Desirable Area Amenities

- » Need to identify what amenities would be needed for attracting mixed use/multi-family redevelopment, e.g. walk/bike environment, tram/trolley/circulator, green space/park, connections to natural area such as La Crosse River Valley, etc.

Valley View Mall's Store Closings

- » Would be beneficial to have a better understanding of Valley View Mall property owner's current thinking and potential future strategies. (City of La Crosse staff has not had much feedback from the owners.)
- » LADCO is interested in making financial and technical contributions to address issue of store closings.

City of La Crosse Collaboration

- » May have interest in partnering with Onalaska on area improvements or building upon them, e.g. adding pedestrian-friendly amenities, updating zoning regulations for mall site to increase development flexibility, particularly mixed use.



2019 Community Open House

A community open house was conducted in January 2019 to review the preliminary recommendations for the State Road 16 Corridor and the Downtown/ Highway 35 Corridor. The focus of the conversation was around transportation improvements (intersection safety, signal timings, etc.) and desired land uses (primarily retail & restaurants) in the corridor. Specific comments included:

- » Too many accidents at County Road OS and State Road 16
- » Consider no left turns and/or a roundabout at Theater Road and Pralle Center Drive
- » Farm and Fleet is impossible to access by foot or bike
- » Try to attract employers that bring in good wages to employees
- » Movie theater needed in the corridor, at the Valley View Mall?
- » Noodles and Company would be great!



2019 community open house.

Summary of Public Meeting Notification for January 8, 2019 Open House

Formal Meeting Announcements:

- » Common Council on December 11th, 2018
- » CDA on December 12th, 2018

Social Media:

- » Event information promoted through Onalaska's Park & Recreation, Police Department, and Fire Department Facebook pages

Press Release:

- » Sent on 12/31/18 to all news media (television, newspaper, and radio) promoting the event
- » Sent on 1/4/19 on Irving Pertzsch Elementary School Email Mailing List

Individual invites to Onalaska Common Council, Committees, Boards, and Commissions:

- » Common Council, Long Range Planning Committee, Great River Landing Committee, Park & Recreation Board, Plan Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and Community Development Authority

Paper Flyers:

- » Installed at various department offices in City Hall

Mailings:

- » Letter to over 500 residents/business owners in "Downtown Onalaska" area on 12/14/18. Postcard reminder to same list on 12/27/18



Redevelopment Framework



Approach to Redevelopment

The State Road 16 Corridor Redevelopment Study outlines an approach for redevelopment in Onalaska's primary commercial district that responds to the realities of the marketplace as well as stakeholder and community leader feedback. The Redevelopment Framework positions the State Road 16 Corridor as a vibrant commercial and evolving mixed use district over the long-term.

This chapter outlines the "Big Ideas" driving the transformation of the area over the next ten to twenty years. These "Big Ideas" are encapsulated in the Development Districts diagram (Figure 4.1), the corresponding precedent examples, the Redevelopment Opportunities diagram (Figure 4.2) and the subsequent redevelopment initiatives. The redevelopment initiatives are organized around three primary categories: redevelopment/ development; transportation; and parks, trails and open space.



Mixed use redevelopment should be planned for portions of the Corridor.

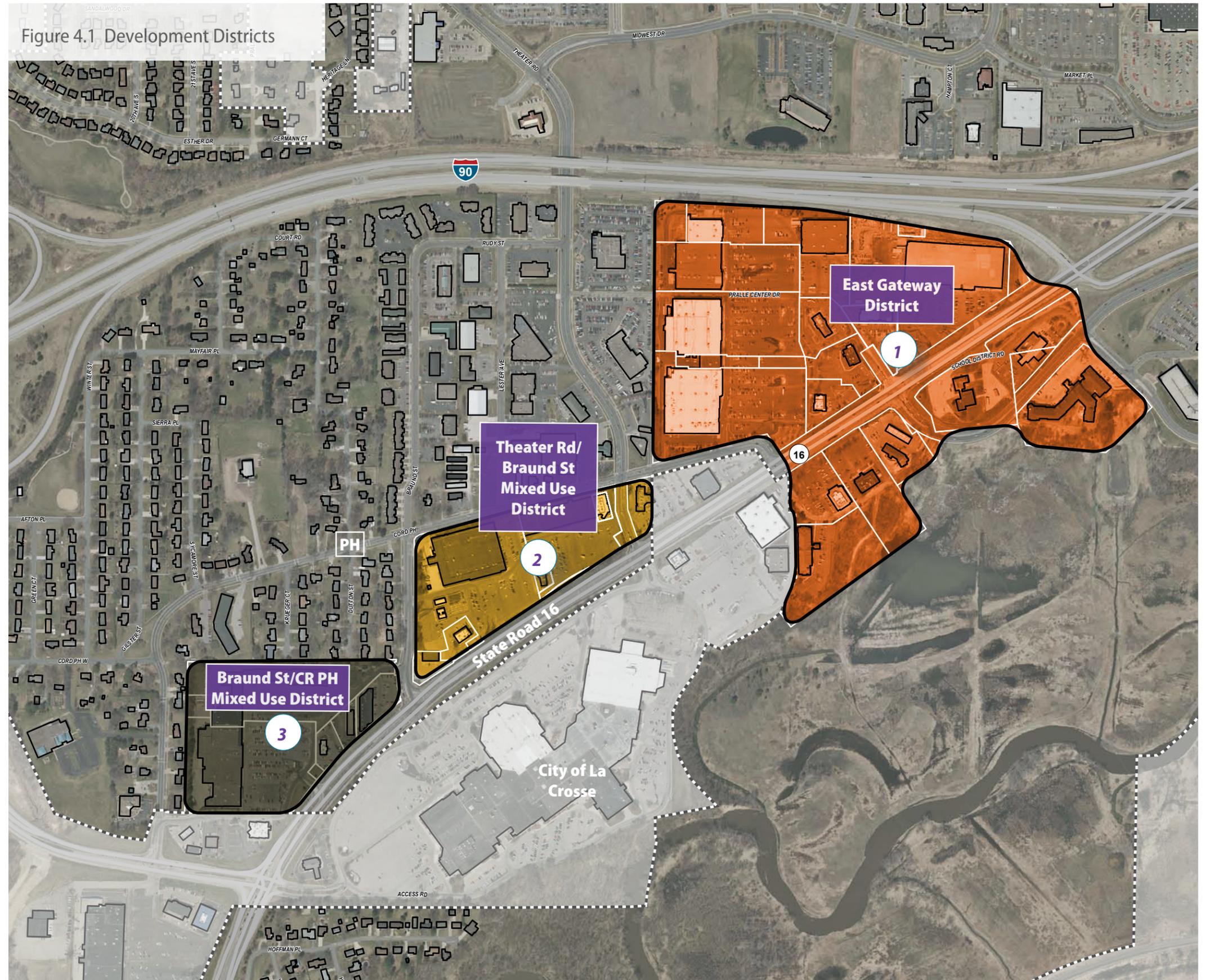


A Collection of Districts

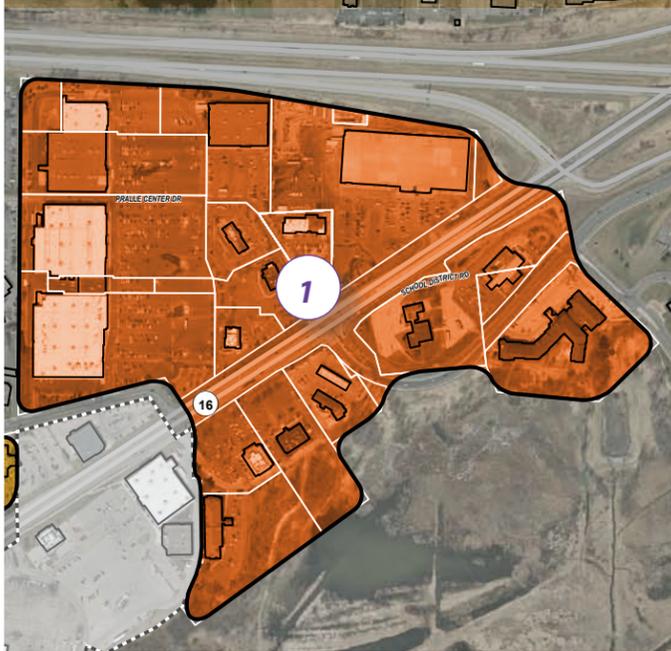
The redevelopment Framework organizes similar land uses and urban design relationships as a series of districts (Figure 4.1). These districts; The East Gateway District; Theater Road to Braund Street District; Braund Street to County Road PH District each have unique characteristics based on their existing uses, parcel shapes and sizes, and relationship to their surrounding uses and the broader roadway network. The following is a summary of the unique characteristics each district exemplifies and a collection of aspirational precedent development projects that align with the desired characteristics of each district.

Districts

- 1 **East Gateway District**
- 2 **Theater Rd/Braund St Mixed Use District**
- 3 **Braund St/CR PH Mixed Use District**



East Gateway District



1 East Gateway District

The East Gateway District is the largest of the three identified districts in the corridor and comprises roughly 60 acres of land on both sides of State Road 16. Unlike the other districts, the City of Onalaska owns land on both sides of State Road 16, providing a strong gateway opportunity off of Interstate 90. Larger commercial uses exist on the west side of the road on approximately 44 acres, while on the east side of the road smaller, individual sites exist near the intersection of Kinney Coulee Road S.

Key recommendations for the East Gateway District include:

- » Maintain focus on commercial / retail redevelopment and reinvestment
 - This area will likely remain a regional retail destination due to its proximity to Interstate 90 and Interchange #5
- » Retain large format, destination retailers and supporting retail development
 - Traditional big-box retail formats
 - Infill with organized pad site and in-line retail development

- Allow for exploration of expanded commercial, retail, entertainment and hospitality uses
- » Recognize this district as a major gateway to Onalaska and the greater La Crosse Region
 - Develop increased community and district branding
 - Provide enhanced wayfinding and signage
- » Enhance interconnectivity throughout Pralle Center development
 - Utilize new public streets or a refined network of private drives to enhance vehicular and delivery circulation and reduce congestion on the regional roadway system
- » Enhance connections (private roadways, trails and sidewalks)

Project Precedent Types:

As part of the planning effort the consultant team studied two project precedent development types to replicate in this district, primarily on the western side of the district.

“Power Centers” are often anchored by larger format retail tenants with a combination of supporting inline retail and commercial pad development. Two specific projects highlighted were Central Park Commons in Eagan, MN, and the Fountains at Arbor Lakes – Maple Grove, MN, both of which have been redeveloped in the past three years. These recent developments provide an enhanced pedestrian realm with traditional, connected street design and pedestrian streetscape elements, yet still accommodate the parking demands for larger format general merchandise retailers.

“Lifestyle Centers” can often be characterized as higher-end shopping in a “Main Street”, or an inside-out mall configuration. These retail destinations often have a park once, shop twice model that includes a very pedestrian friendly walking environment with a number of ancillary amenities such as pocket parks, plazas and fountains to create

Precedent - Power Center



Power centers are typically anchored by larger format retail, grocery, and/or entertainment.

spaces for community gathering. Two specific projects highlighted were the Shoppes at Arbor Lakes – Maple Grove, MN and Woodbury Lakes – Woodbury, MN.

Precedent - Lifestyle Center



Lifestyle Centers provide a high quality pedestrian realm, walkable storefront shopping experience, with a dynamic mix of experience retail/restaurants and entertainment.

CASE STUDY – Walmart Reimagined



Walmart, the country's largest general merchandise retailer, has embarked on a retrofit of portions of the land within and adjacent to existing stores to reflect elements of "town centers" to create additional development and enliven and activate underutilized portions of the property. As discussed with stakeholders in the corridor, opportunities are present to add additional development in over-parked surface parking lots. Many of the key elements of the Walmart Reimagined story could fit well in the State Road 16 Corridor.

Walmart Reimagined Key Elements:

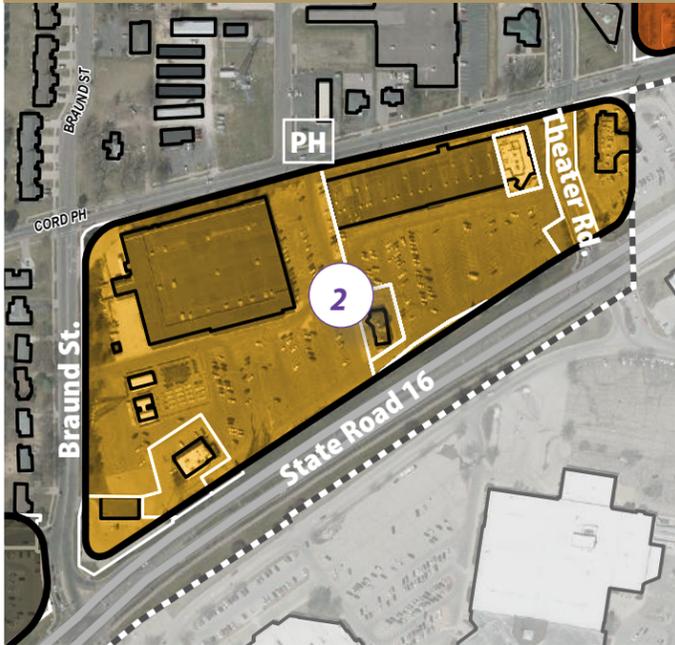
- » Community Connectivity – sites will feature paved pathways connecting to the community for consumers who prefer to walk or bike to destinations
- » Wellness – a mix of healthy destinations
- » Food & Beverage – diverse dining activities
- » Entertainment – carefully curate mix of entertainment featuring cinemas, bowling, golf, arcades and outdoor activities
- » Recreation – a mix of activated green spaces and family oriented experiences
- » Essential Services – a mix of essential services such as fuel, daycare and pet-care
- » Mobility Hub – sites will feature a Mobility Hub to connect the site with its community, such as 3rd party rideshare options, bike rentals and bus stops
- » Retail Tenants – carefully curated mix of local, regional and national tenants in an active setting, including inside the building

Critical elements to making these types of improvements in the recaptured parking lot areas of the larger format big-box users in the State Road 16 Corridor will require strong connections to surrounding areas and strategic placement of buildings. The redesign of drive aisles to feel more like downtown scale streets and the use of sidewalks and trails will create a more desirable pedestrian realm, while the clustering of buildings will create a walkable destination and afford opportunities for outdoor dining and spaces for social interaction.

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 Images by Massa Multimedia Architecture (MMA)

<https://www.walmartreimagined.com/>

Theater Rd/Braund St Mixed-Use District



2 Theater Road/ Braund Street District:

The Theater Road/ Braund Street District is approximately 15 acres of irregularly shaped land. Bound by State Road 16 to the south, County Road PH to the north, Theater Road to the east and Braund Street to the west this district provides a unique opportunity to explore mixed use development and the introduction of residential land uses into the corridor. Comprised of two larger land owners and three smaller pad sites there are opportunities for site assembly and redevelopment of all or portions of this district in the future. Access management and internal circulation are critical aspects to redevelopment in this location and will likely involve upgrades to the surrounding roadway network and changes in traffic patterns.

Key recommendations for the Theater Road/ Braund Street District include:

- » Creation of a more urban, or village like development pattern
- » Maintaining commercial vitality on the site
- » Introduction of vertical mixed use and/or high density residential
- » With increased development intensity and density, explore options for structured parking integrated with development
- » Enhanced connections (public/ private roadways, trails and sidewalks), particularly across State Road 16 to the Valley View Mall site and the La Crosse River Conservancy
- » Create a activated park space to frame development and provide an amenity for businesses and residents.
- » Enhanced wayfinding, signage and district/ development branding

Project Precedent Types:

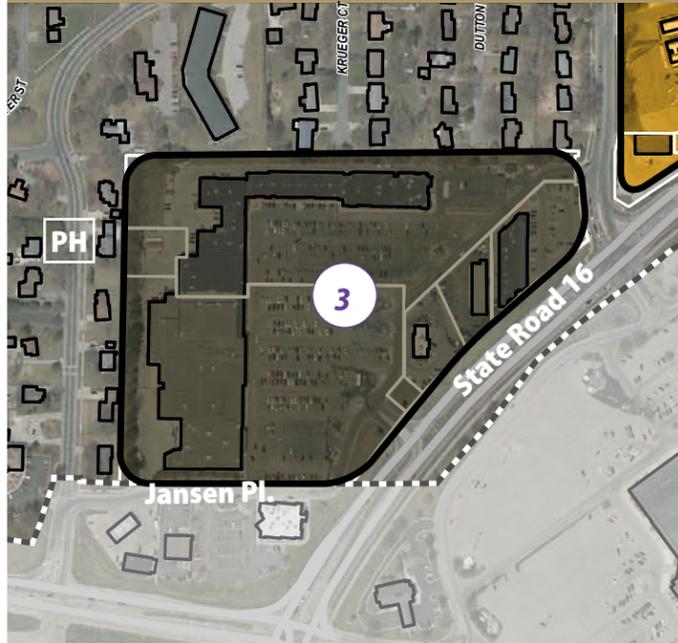
Precedents for this location could fall into the “New Town Village” category of development which essentially blends commercial, retail and residential into a more compact, pedestrian scaled development pattern. Typically these new developments are a mix of franchise and local tenants on the commercial/ retail end, with smaller professional office and service uses mixed in. Higher density housing such as apartments or condominiums can also be found surrounding the core development as stand-alone uses or vertically integrated above commercial uses. The Village at Mendota Heights in Mendota Heights was studied as a similar project precedent do to the overall development size, scale of development (2 story mixed use with surrounding 4 story residential).

Precedent - New Town Village



New Town Villages are compact, urban developments with a quaint village character to buildings and the public realm.

Braund St/CR PH Mixed Use District



3 Braund Street District / CR PH District:

Similar, but with more depth, and size (17 acres) and general shape, the Braund Street / CR PH District takes on similar characteristics to the Theater Road/ Braund Street District. This district however, is immediately adjacent to residential land uses to the west and north, creating more challenges for integrating with the adjacent neighborhood.

Key recommendations for the Braund Street / CR PH District include:

- » Creation of a more urban, or village like development pattern
- » Maintaining commercial vitality on the site
- » Introduction of vertical mixed use and/or high density residential with sensitivity to surrounding land uses
- » With increased development intensity and density, explore options for structured parking integrated with development
- » Enhanced connections (public/ private roadways, trails and sidewalks), particularly across State Road 16 to the Valley View Mall site and the La Crosse River Conservancy
- » Create a activated park space to frame development and provide an amenity for businesses and residents
- » Enhanced wayfinding, signage and district/ development branding
- » Coordinated efforts with the City of La Crosse on access improvements to the CR PH/State Road 157 intersection and upgrades to Jansen Place
- » Respect adjacent land uses with appropriate screening or scale of development

Project Precedent Types:

Again, The Village at Mendota Heights model was studied here, particularly how the commercial development is organized to maintain visibility toward the main highway and develop additional intensity (second story office and structured parking internal to the development). Organized retail pad development allows sightlines to uses away from the highway.

Precedent - New Town Village



The following narrative represents the key opportunities for the State Road 16 Corridor organized by redevelopment, transportation, and parks, trails and open space initiatives and are graphically represented in Figure 4.2.



Redevelopment Opportunities

- » Maintain progress on active redevelopment sites (former Old Country Buffet site, former Fauver Hill School site)
- » Infill remaining greenfield site at Gundersen Campus (Senior Housing)
- » Infill over-parked parking lots (Commercial/ Retail uses)
- » Intensify uses by repurposing over-sized buildings or subdividing
- » Integrate potential larger redevelopment sites with roadway improvements
- » Explore options for mixed use (housing, office, retail) with redevelopment
- » Continue on-going planning with the City of La Crosse in the State Road 16 Corridor (Valley View Mall Site)



Transportation Opportunities

- » Explore options for new public roadways to enhance connectivity and reduce congestion at State Road 16 intersections, specific areas include:
 - Pralle Center Drive between Theater Road and State Road 16
 - Connection along the La Crosse River Conservancy Area
- » Explore options for overpass of I-90 east of Interchange #5 (State Road 16)
- » Explore the viability of a grade separated crossing of I-90 (roadway or trail) between Theater Road and State Road 16.
- » Creation of a "Parkway Road" along the ridgeline of the La Crosse River Conservancy Area (behind the Valley View Mall)
- » Creation of improved stacking distances for turning movements at key intersections
- » Integration of synced signal at County Road PH and Theater Road with signal at State Road 16 and Theater Road plus additional access management
- » Potential reconfiguration of County Road PH & Theater Road intersection with redevelopment and access management
- » Continue on-going planning with the WisDOT & City of La Crosse in the State Road 16 Corridor (access points, intersection controls, safety improvements)
- » Center turn lane improvements to improve safety and visibility (planned improvement project)



Parks, Trails, and Open Space Opportunities

- » Enhance pedestrian and bike connectivity in the corridor
- » Create stronger pedestrian connections between businesses
- » Create safer crossings of State Road 16
- » Connect regional trail network through the State Road 16 Corridor and to the La Crosse River Conservancy Area
- » Consider the integration of plaza/park spaces with redevelopment to aid in placemaking
- » Enhance wayfinding and signage to key park and trail destinations (La Crosse River Conservancy Area, Great River State Trail/ La Crosse River State Trail Trailhead on County Road B) as well as key bridges, underpasses and overpasses (Interstate 90) to strengthen connectivity in the district



Development character example.

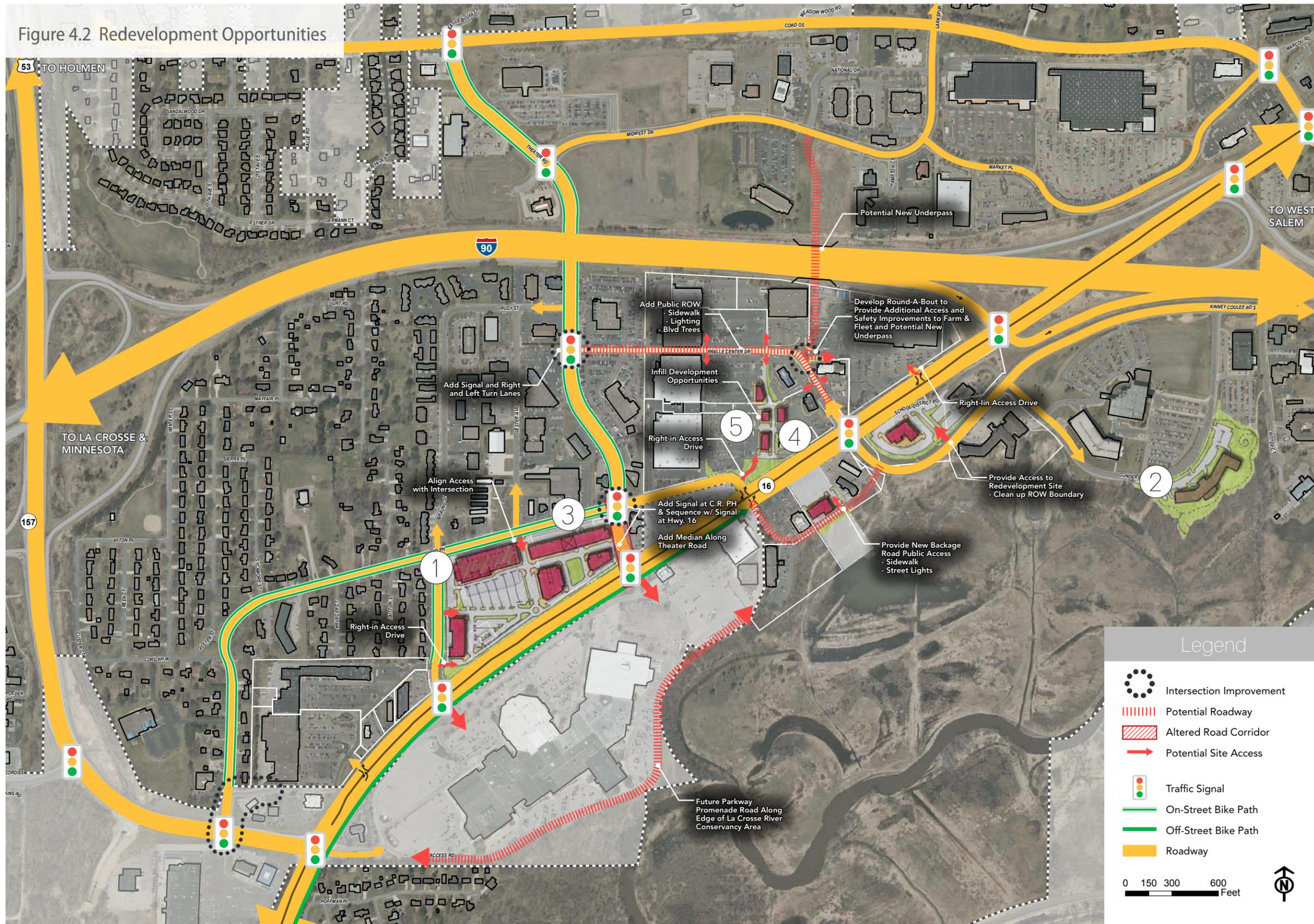


Development character example.



Explore options for including community gathering with redevelopment.

Figure 4.2 Redevelopment Opportunities



Legend

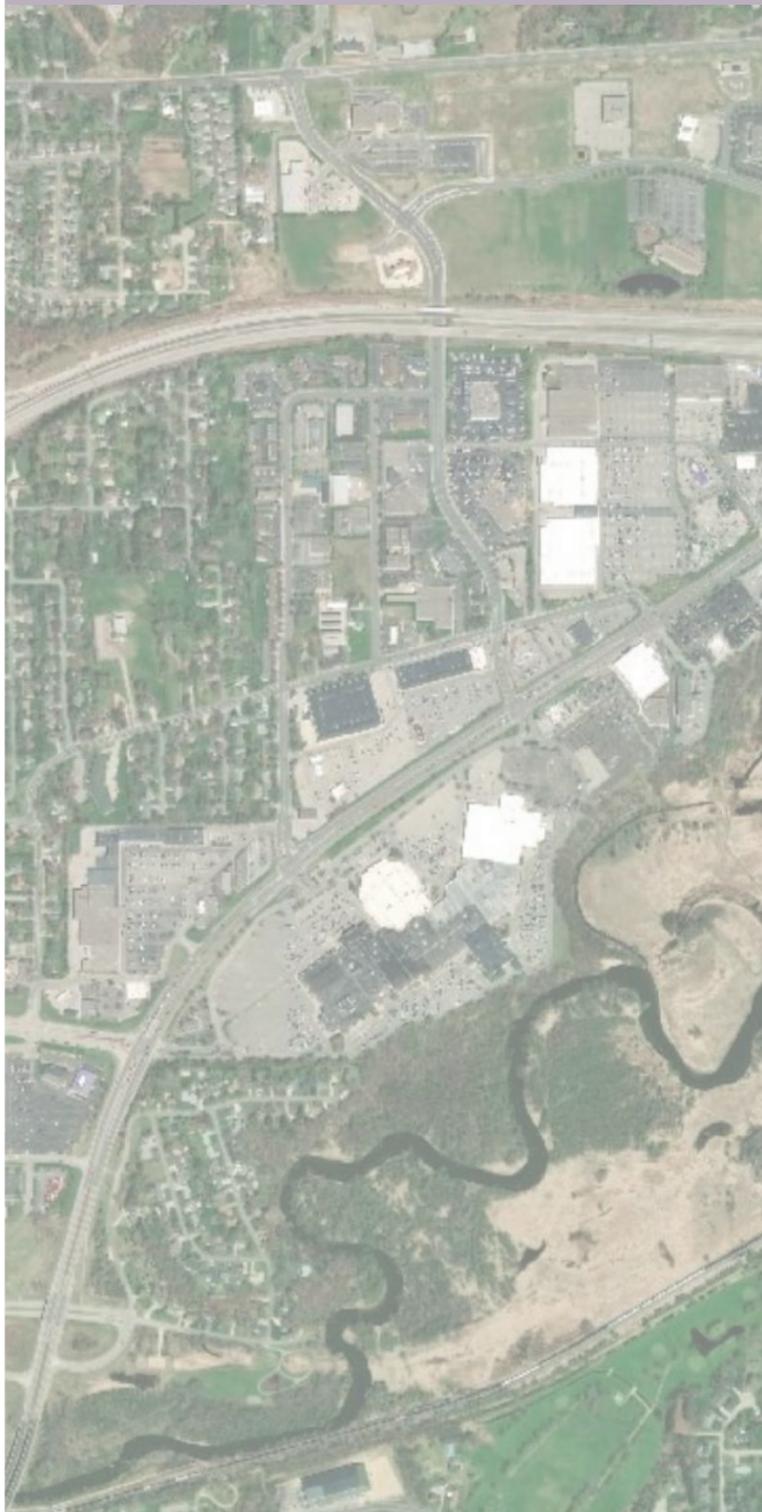
- Intersection Improvement
- Potential Roadway
- Altered Road Corridor
- Potential Site Access
- Traffic Signal
- On-Street Bike Path
- Off-Street Bike Path
- Roadway

0 150 300 600 Feet





Implementation



Keys to Implementation

Several factors will be crucial in successfully realizing the vision set forth by the City of Onalaska within this State Road 16 Redevelopment Study. These factors apply regardless of the actual form and timing of redevelopment:

Patience

Transformation of the State Road 16 Corridor cannot be implemented overnight. The time frame for implementation reflects its evolutionary nature; it looks forward over a period of years. The desired change often requires the patience to wait for the right things to happen, rather than making changes simply to be seen as doing something.

Commitment

Commitment to the State Road 16 Redevelopment Study and patience go hand-in-hand. This study does more than simply seek to attract new development to shovel-ready sites in Onalaska; it provides a road map to enhance the corridor over time. Commitment to the plan means the willingness to actively promote public and private investments that align with the objectives of the study. It also requires the willingness by decision makers to deter developments which do not meet the objectives of the plan. Not all of these decisions will be easy or will they occur exactly as analyzed in this study.

Public & Private Partnerships

Removal of the physical and economic barriers to redevelopment in Onalaska will likely require some public financial assistance. The complexity of redevelopment envisioned for the area clearly demonstrates the need for public financial participation. Private investment will not be sufficient to pay for all costs associated with every redevelopment project. Strong public/private partnerships will make redevelopment projects more financially feasible, promote the desired types of development and build momentum in the area.

However, the needs established in this study do not make public financial assistance an entitlement. Ongoing planning will define the nature of assistance and amount available for each step throughout the implementation process. This approach ensures that public monies are used to achieve desired public outcomes and not simply make development more affordable (or profitable) for the developer.

Financial Reality

Implementing the State Road 16 Redevelopment Study requires careful investment of public funds, but the private side of the financial equation must not be overlooked. New development and existing businesses will pay for their portion of the improvements called for in the study. Implementing the State Road 16 Redevelopment Study seeks to balance the investment in public initiatives with the creation of a financial environment that sustains successful businesses.

Strategic Investments:

If financial support for the plan was unlimited, the need for strategic decisions would be less important. With limited funds, every expenditure is crucial. It is not possible to immediately undertake all of the initiatives described in this study. Needs and opportunities not contemplated in the study may arise in the future. Every investment must be evaluated for its impact on enhancing the State Road 16 Corridor.



Roles & Responsibilities

There is a temptation to give sole responsibility for implementation of the State Road 16 Study to the City of Onalaska. Many of the powers and resources needed to undertake the actions described in this Study are held by the City. The success of the State Road 16 Corridor cannot be made the only by responsibility of City government. Achieving the vision for the corridor requires ongoing collaboration of both public and private

stakeholders. This section describes the roles and responsibilities of key parties.

Business and Property Owners

While the City influences the physical setting, the State Road 16 Corridor remains a place of private activity. Individual businesses determine the type of goods and services available in the corridor. Individual businesses make decisions about how they operate. Property owners decide how to maintain and improve their buildings. Individual property access, cross access agreements and internal circulation drives are relied on heavily for circulation. Each of these factors plays a role in the long-term success of the corridor.



State Road 16 existing retail.

City of Onalaska

The ultimate responsibility for implementing the recommendations of this redevelopment study rests with the City of Onalaska. The Common Council and CDA will provide direction on staff resources, review of proposed development projects and approve public investments. Responsibility for managing redevelopment in the State Road 16 Corridor will be a priority for the CDA and the Planning / Zoning and Engineering Departments of the City.

Planning / Zoning Department

The Planning / Zoning Department will share a lead role in managing implementation for the City. The actions to be taken by the Planning / Zoning Department to implement the study include:

- » Application of land use controls and redevelopment guidelines to shepherd private development;
- » Review of development plans and proposals;
- » Coordination of planning for capital improvements needed to facilitate redevelopment; and
- » Creation of financial plans for public redevelopment investments and continued monitoring.

Engineering Department

The Engineering Department also plays a major role through the design of public infrastructure (utility and roadway) improvements needed to support development and redevelopment in the State Road 16 Corridor. The Engineering Department is a key player in planning for future roadway and transportation improvements, including ongoing conversations with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) on State Road 16 safety improvement projects and potential future intersection improvements along the corridor. The Onalaska Engineering Department will also work closely with WisDOT and City of La Crosse Engineering staff regarding transportation enhancements and access controls along State Road 16 at key intersections such as South Kinney Coulee Road, Theater Road, Braund Street and County Road PH.

Community Development Authority (CDA)

The State Road 16 Corridor is an important location for economic development and job creation in the City of Onalaska. The CDA will maintain redevelopment momentum and monitor the Valley View Mall situation and potential impacts. The CDA

will need to determine their specific roles for a coordinated effort with the Common Council. Several potential CDA actions make them an important player in the successful implementation of the plan:

- » Provide a framework for coordinating efforts of the community. With limited resources, it is essential that the community work in unison to undertake redevelopment. The knowledge and experience gained from the planning process allows CDA members to efficiently and effectively take steps needed to implement core objectives of the study.
- » Work to ensure that economic development initiatives within Onalaska are a recognized priority for Common Council members.
- » Maintain an active role. Actively pursuing critical properties for redevelopment or educating business owners on improvement or reinvestment programs with low interest loans should be continued and expanded roles for the CDA.
- » Create an annual redevelopment “action plan” and report summary to help monitor progress toward implementation. This action plan would outline key steps to occur during the year, including descriptions of actions, responsible parties and funding resources. It forces the parties to not only consider what needs to be done in the coming year, but also why identified steps that were not taken in the prior year.
- » Work with business owners and landlords to promote and help finance the maintenance and revitalization of businesses (both buildings and site property) in the State Road 16 Corridor.
- » Host annual developer roundtables or site tours showcasing the potential of Onalaska sites to perspective developers.
- » Recognize the individual assets of the three primary locations (East Gateway, Theater Road/ Braund Street, and Braund Street/ County Road PH) for economic development and steer the appropriate uses to those areas.
- » Provide guidance to the City to ensure that proposed development projects and public improvements are consistent with the study.

- » Promote development projects with sustainable design practices.
- » Continue to find the appropriate funding options for various redevelopment projects.
- » Collaborate with private brokers marketing Onalaska sites and leveraging joint marketing efforts.

Plan Commission

The Plan Commission has the lead responsibility for evaluating the application of land use controls needed to implement the Study. The Plan Commission advises the Common Council on issues involving the establishment of and compliance with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the zoning, subdivision, and sign ordinances. The Commission also reviews residential, commercial, and industrial development proposals and makes recommendations to the Common Council according to the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and requirements of the zoning, subdivision, and sign ordinances. The Plan Commission plays a key role in integrating the State Road 16 Corridor Study with the update of the Comprehensive Plan and Unified Development Code.



Members of the community gathering at an open house in January 2019.

Common Council

The Common Council sets the foundation for implementing this study consistent with the overall mission of the City. While other bodies (Plan Commission and CDA) play key roles in the implementation process, important redevelopment powers reside with the Common Council. Among the powers that may be needed to undertake public initiatives in the State Road 16 Corridor are:

- » Allocate money in the annual budget to capital improvements in State Road 16 Corridor.
- » Approve the establishment of tax increment financing (TIF) districts.
- » Levy of special assessments for public improvements.
- » Issuance of general obligation bonds to finance redevelopment and improvement projects.

Community-at-Large

The community of Onalaska must stay involved as redevelopment continues over time. The community must work together with decision-makers and provide the necessary input for any new development, while respecting existing land owners’ desires and meeting the vision for the State Road 16 Corridor Redevelopment Study. Ultimately, the community must:

- » Provide a singular focus for the study. The knowledge gained from the planning process will allow members of the community to efficiently and effectively comment on redevelopment proposals.
- » Continue public involvement. Continue to attend public meetings, or provide comments and suggestions to proposals as they come forward.



Development Guidance and Controls

The initial focus of implementation will be on actions needed to establish the State Road 16 Corridor Redevelopment Study as the official guide for development and redevelopment for the State Road 16 Corridor in Onalaska. These procedural steps in implementation involve the adoption of key policy documents and updated development controls.

Approve the State Road 16 Corridor Redevelopment Study

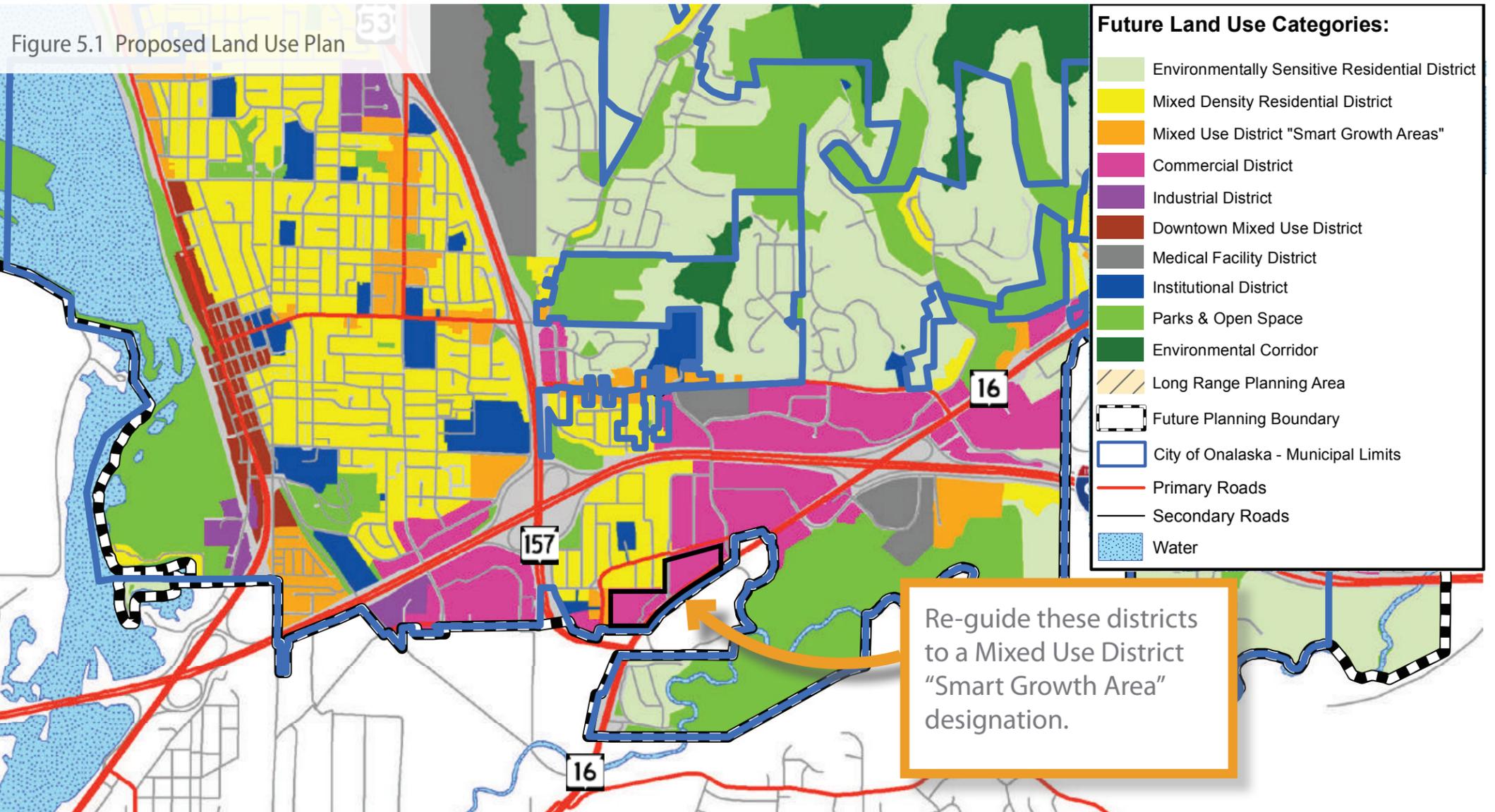
The first implementation step is for the CDA and Common Council to approve this Study. These approvals set the stage for subsequent actions such as amending the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinances, capital improvement programs as well as the identification of potential funding sources.

Amend the Comprehensive Plan

The City will need to update the Comprehensive Plan with the new "State Road 16 Corridor Redevelopment Study," including the recommended land use plan designations (Figure 5.1) and appropriate policies consistent with the vision of this Study. Amending the Comprehensive Plan creates the foundation for all other implementation actions. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan is a statutory requirement for zoning regulations, capital improvements and redevelopment projects.

Amend Zoning Regulations

More direct control of development comes from zoning regulations. The existing regulations within the Light Industrial District (M-I) will require modification to conform to this plan. Part of the necessary modification is enabling the type and form of development proposed in this Study, for example, allowing vertical mixed use and residential use in portions of the corridor as well as refining the minimum parking space requirements.



The existing Light Industrial District (M-I) and Planned Commercial Industrial District (PCID) could be replaced with a new zoning district (B-3 District) consistent with the uses and design character identified in this Study. Key elements in this new district should recommend a reduced parking ratio for commercial use and incentives for residential development. Zoning changes are likely needed in order to implement the State Road 16 Corridor Study. More detailed analysis and formal recommendation of any zoning changes will be handled by the City of Onalaska through the UDC rewrite project update

which is scheduled for completion at the end of 2019. Some of these updates could include a rezone of the Gundersen Campus to Medical Campus District (MCD) and the former Fauver School Site to a Business (B) District.



Redevelopment Initiatives

Implementation of the State Road 16 Corridor Redevelopment Study is not a single action, but a series of sequenced steps. These steps will be taken over time and across multiple phases. Initial focus should be on several implementation initiatives that lay the foundation for change. Active development projects on private property in the East Gateway District (the former Old Country Buffet site and Fauver Hill School site) and the potential infill and redevelopment in over-parked areas of Pralle Center will serve as models for future private development in corridor.

During the early years of redevelopment, there are several critical actions the City of Onalaska can take to reduce development constraints, allow for greater investment in public amenities and infrastructure and enhance the market viability of multiple locations. Suggested activities to enhance project success include:

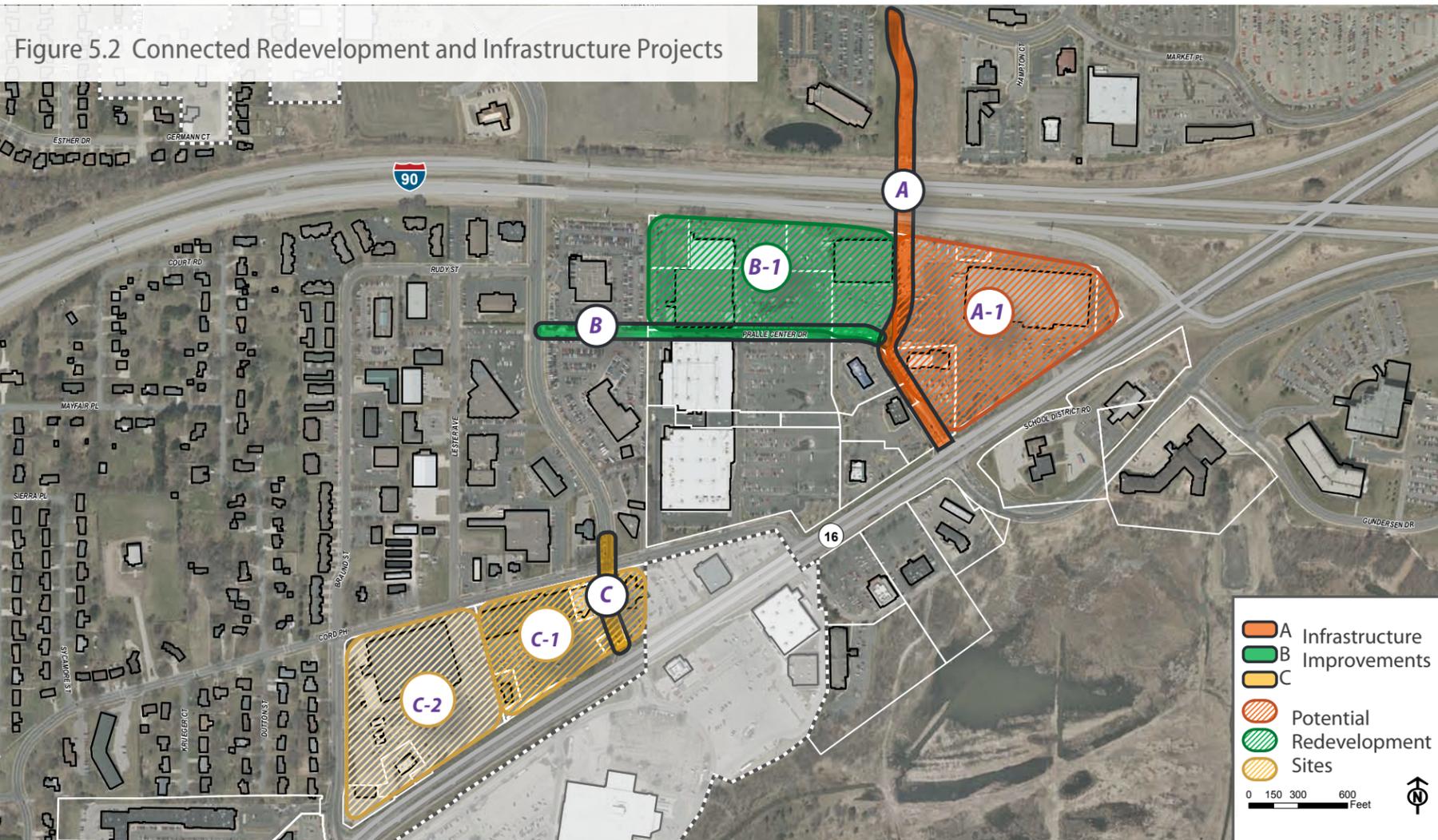
Start small but with key catalytic projects

Strategically stage development so that it builds market momentum and so early projects act as positive demonstrations of great things to come in the corridor. Starting with small, achievable projects will demonstrate success. Additionally, finding a diversity of projects that are viable in the market

place today will reduce competition within the community. Allowing a strategic range of early projects should be guided carefully. Extensive examination as to which projects should or should not receive financial assistance should take place. Key steps to advance this initiative include:

- » Continuing the active redevelopment on the two active existing sites; the Old Country Buffet site and the former Fauver Hill School site owned by Gundersen Lutheran.
- » Identify additional redevelopment sites in underutilized surface parking lots through a parking study (in collaboration with existing property owners).
- » Link potential redevelopment sites with desired infrastructure improvements (see Figure 5.2) as redevelopment is proposed for larger sites, these are strategic opportunities to enhance redevelopment with improved access and broader connectivity. These combined projects could include:

- A** Farm & Fleet & Marshview Centre with the potential I-90 underpass, round-a-bout, and right-in only access configuration on State Road 16
- B** Pralle Center with a new public east/west Road connection
- C** Pathos Properties & Shopko sites with Theater Road



Build high-quality development

Directing and building high-quality commercial and residential development is critical to setting the table for future success. Early projects in the ground will provide the model for future development and establishing a high finish with proper selection of building materials will make great strides in elevating the image of Onalaska. Buildings should be respectful of adjacent properties and be designed with the appropriate scale. Both commercial and housing development should have a strong street presence and varied materials. One approach to consider is establishing design standards/guidelines as part of a new zoning district (B-3).

Build a high-quality public realm

Continued investment in the public realm, particularly along the main corridors of State Road 16, Theater Road, Braund Street, County Road PH, and South Kinney Coulee Road will provide an added boost to the creation of a unique destination, or district identity which will help to drive future market interest. The creation of new streets within the identified redevelopment districts and/ or the enhancement of existing private drives toward high quality streetscapes will aid in district identity and create a desirable experience. Additionally, stronger pedestrian links between existing neighborhoods and the La Crosse Area Conservancy and will also benefit the area as a whole over time with enhanced connectivity, e.g. fill in the trail gap along south side of State Road 16.

Enhance community identity and legibility

Expanding and enhancing district wayfinding and signage early in the redevelopment stages will create a unified and more legible / navigable environment for State Road 16 Corridor business patrons. Enhanced City of Onalaska entry monuments and streetscape along State Road 16, combined with development branding and monuments.

Complete update of the zoning code

Collaborate with property owners on appropriate parking requirements and the application of mixed use development in the corridor as a part of the UDC rewrite project in 2019.

Conduct additional transportation analysis

Leverage data from the WisDOT and/or conduct a detailed traffic study of the corridor prior to major redevelopment (this should occur for either the Onalaska or La Crosse side of State Road 16). The Theater Road, County Road PH and State Road 16 area should be a priority focus. Opportunities should be explored to increase the public roadway network or refine/ organize the private drive network to enhance district-wide circulation and create additional development sites.

Continue integrated planning with City of La Crosse on the Valley View Mall

Beyond the integrated transportation planning in the corridor, the City of Onalaska should continue conversations with the City of La Crosse on its long-term redevelopment strategy for the Valley View Mall. Both communities benefit from a maintaining a vibrant and successful corridor.

Connect to the La Crosse River

Visual connections to the La Crosse River Conservancy Area exist today along South Kinney Coulee Road. Strengthening physical connections to the La Crosse River Valley will require coordination with the City of La Crosse through potential redevelopment of the Valley View Mall Site. The "Parkway Promenade" road along the backside of the existing Mall could create a strong public amenity for the entire corridor and if paired with an additional pedestrian bridge crossing over the La Crosse River, create a strong connection to the Great River State Trail and the La Crosse River State Trail.

Develop Architectural and Site Design Guidelines

Design guidelines serve as an important communication tool between the CDA, the City, property owners, business owners and developers. Aspects of the design guidelines are outlined as a part of Chapter 4 of this Study, and could potentially be incorporated into a new zoning district for portions of the State Road 16 Corridor (see previous section). Design guidelines could become a standard tool in evaluating proposed developments for the area. These guidelines should be rooted in the District Diagram (Figure 4.1) and Redevelopment Opportunities Diagram (Figure 4.2) and Redevelopment Opportunities. Application of desired (but not absolutely required) design guidelines could be connected to an incentive based approach whereby achieving certain design characteristics could lead to fast tracking entitlements or potential public financial assistance. Architectural guidelines, design of parking lots and private drives, as well as wayfinding and signage should be addressed through this approach.



Municipal Tools for Public Investments

The vision for the State Road 16 Corridor will continue to require investment by the City of Onalaska. As larger scale redevelopment opportunities present themselves in the corridor, the City may find public benefit with additional investments through the participation in private redevelopment projects. This section highlights the primary municipal finance tools available to support public investments in the State Road 16 Corridor, both through public improvements and participation in private redevelopment projects. The primary finance tools available to cities are limited. This information is not intended to be an exhaustive guide, but rather a high level overview, a starting point, for further investigation. The use of these tools may be subject to requirements not discussed in this section. In addition, the statutes that govern these tools can be changed by the State Legislature.

Tax Incremental Finance

Tax incremental finance (TIF) is one of the primary development finance tools available to Wisconsin cities. TIF is simple in concept, but complex in its application. Through TIF, the property taxes created by new development (or redevelopment) are captured and used to finance activities needed to encourage the development. The city approved a TID for the Great River Residences Riverfront Redevelopment Project in February 2019.

TIF can be used to finance many actions needed to facilitate redevelopment, including land acquisition, site preparation, parking, and public improvements. In addition, TIF creates a means to borrow money needed to pay for redevelopment costs. The City can issue general obligation bonds to finance certain qualified expenses. These bonds may be supported with tax increments and other legally available revenues. The City has the authority to create a Tax Incremental District (TID) for a redevelopment site or area. The current value of all the taxable property within the defined TID boundaries is established

prior to any redevelopment. New construction and investment increases the property's value which results in increased/incremental tax value.

Special Assessments

Public improvements are often financed using the power to levy special assessments. The use of special assessments for the majority of public improvements is governed by state statutes. Essentially, special assessments are a means for benefiting properties to pay for all or part of the costs associated with improvements, and to spread the impact over a period of years. Special assessments can be used to finance public infrastructure improvements outlined in this study including streets, sidewalks and trails, streetscape, lighting and parking.

The method of spreading the assessments and the terms of the assessments are set by the City. Typically, the primary legal constraints on special assessments are:

- » The amount of the assessment cannot exceed the benefit the property receives from the improvement. The benefit is measured by the increase in property value.
- » The method assessment must be uniformly applied to the same type of property.

General Property Taxes

General property taxes can be used to finance many of the services, improvements, facilities and development activities needed to implement elements of the Redevelopment Study. Taxes may be levied through the General Fund, to pay debt service on bonds, and as a levy for the CDA. The ability to use property taxes provides another resource for the State Road 16 Corridor.

Other City Funds

While property taxes are the largest and most obvious source of City revenues, other funds may play a role in implementing the Redevelopment

Study. The use of other City funds should be factored into capital improvements planning and earmarked for State Road 16 Corridor. Some potential funding sources include:

- » Utility revenues. Monies from municipal utilities may be available to certain portions of the State Road 16 Corridor infrastructure improvement projects.
- » Park dedication fees. New development contributes money (or land) towards the creation of the local park system. Revenues from park dedication may be available to support park and trail improvements.
- » State aid for roads. The City receives money from the State for the construction and maintenance of roads. These roads must be part of the City's designated state aid street system.

Commercial Rehabilitation Loans and Grants

Typically, through CDAs, cities have broad powers to facilitate the revitalization of existing buildings. State law also creates specific statutory authority for loans by cities. The City may establish a program to make loans to finance the rehabilitation of small and medium-sized commercial buildings. The program can be funded through the issuance of revenue bonds or obligations payable solely from all or a portion of the revenues derived from or other contributions to the program. Other revenues of the City (tax increment or tax abatement proceeds, for instance) could be used to assist the program.

Non-Municipal Revenue Sources

The City should continue to be informed and pay attention to other revenue sources that exist or may become available from La Crosse County or the State of Wisconsin or other sources. Redevelopment projects often rely on a myriad and ever-changing source of revenues and programs to achieve City objectives.



Regional Resources

Coulee Region Business Center

The Coulee Region Business Center (CRBC) provides facilities, resources, mentoring and coaching to small businesses and entrepreneurs in the La Crosse area. The Center offers shared services and a network of professional assistance, giving entrepreneurs access to a wealth of business knowledge and support services. They can help to prepare a business plan, access funding, and market and grow your business.

Dairyland Power Cooperative

Look to Dairyland's Business Development Assistance and Economic Development Loan Programs for site location assistance and an array of financing programs for new or expanding businesses.

La Crosse Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau

This non-profit organization represents the convention and tourism industries of the La Crosse/ Onalaska Area business community, actively marketing the area to tourists and meeting planners both nationally and internationally.

La Crosse Area Development Corporation (LADCO)

Founded in 1971, the La Crosse Area Development Corporation (LADCO) focuses on attracting businesses, retaining businesses, and they co-manage the Coulee Region Business Center. Services include: business attraction & retention assistance, site search/analysis, financial program coordination, assembly of private/public sector project teams, workforce development service, and regional transportation initiatives. LADCO also coordinates the Oktoberfest in the Capitol event and the La Crosse Area Inventors & Entrepreneurs Club.

La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC)

The La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization designated to perform transportation planning activities for the La Crosse and La Crescent Area. The main objectives of the LAPC are to develop and maintain a long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan and a short-range Transportation Improvement Program, and other regionally significant projects.

La Crosse County Economic Development (LCED)

The LCED provides information on County industrial parks, available sites, economic profile, and their other business assistance programs, including their revolving loan fund program.

Mississippi River Regional Plan Commission (MRRPC)

Organized in 1964, MRRPC is a commission of nine counties along the Mississippi River in western Wisconsin. The organization is charged with planning for the physical, social and economic development of the region. The Commission provides administrative and technical assistance to several community, county or multi-county revolving loan funds.

7 Rivers Alliance

The Alliance is a regional leadership group that boosts economic growth by fostering collaboration in western Wisconsin, southeast Minnesota, and northeast Iowa. The Alliance brings together public and private resources to forge entrepreneurial growth and serves as a clearinghouse of vital information to enhance quality of life in the region.

UW-Extension La Crosse County

The community and economic development agent can provide information and technical assistance on economic development in La Crosse County.

Small Business Development Center

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located at the University Wisconsin – La Crosse, is one of ten university-based SBDCs in Wisconsin. The SBDC mission is to provide learning opportunities and practical guidance to help individuals make informed business decisions. The La Crosse SBDC serves seven counties in the region and offers several types of services including seminars, customized in-house training, and individualized counseling.

Xcel Energy

Xcel offers a variety of programs and services for expanding companies or new industries wishing to relocate in their service area. They offer customized programs designed to help businesses and communities grow.



Tax increment financing may be a tool for public financial assistance for redevelopment. Image: www.farm



State Programs

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

WEDC is a public-private corporation that replaced the State Department of Commerce in 2011 and leads the state's economic development efforts. WEDC provides a number of programs and services focused on business and community development including:

- » Community Development Investment Grant – Funds may be used for building renovation, historic preservation, demolition, new construction, infrastructure investment, and project/site development planning. Grants are limited to 25% of eligible project costs, with a maximum of up to \$250,000, and grant recipients must provide a 3:1 match investment in project costs.
- » Brownfield Site Assessment Grant – Funds may be used to identify and quantify the degree and extent of soil, vapor and groundwater contamination.
- » Brownfields Grant - Funds may be used for brownfield redevelopment or associated environmental remediation activities such as environmental investigation, remediation or monitoring of the site; removal of hazardous waste containers; soil removal, capping, barrier installation and vapor intrusion systems; and demolition activities that will facilitate redevelopment in a brownfield project.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

WisDOT allocates federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds to transportation improvement projects that “expand travel choice, strengthen the local economy, improve the quality of life, and protect the environment.” The categories of eligible TAP projects include: trail facilities for non-motorized transport; constructing safe routes for non-drivers; converting abandoned railroad corridors for non-motorized transportation; constructing

turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas; community improvement activities; any environmental mitigation activity; the Recreational Trails Program; the Safe Routes to Schools program; and projects in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways. All TAP projects are funded 80% federally, with a 20% local match. The minimum project cost is \$50,000 for non-infrastructure and \$300,000 for infrastructure projects.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

WHEDA works with developers to finance affordable rental housing and support economic development and agriculture through its small business guarantee programs. Look to them for New Market Tax Credits, Small Business Financial Products, and Multifamily Financing and Tax Credits.

(Source: City of La Crosse, 2018)



Federal Programs

Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)

The low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) program, created in 1986 and made permanent in 1993, is an indirect federal subsidy used to finance the construction and rehabilitation of low-income affordable rental housing. This program was created as an incentive for private developers and investors to provide more low-income housing. Without this incentive, affordable rental housing projects do not generate sufficient profit to warrant the investment.

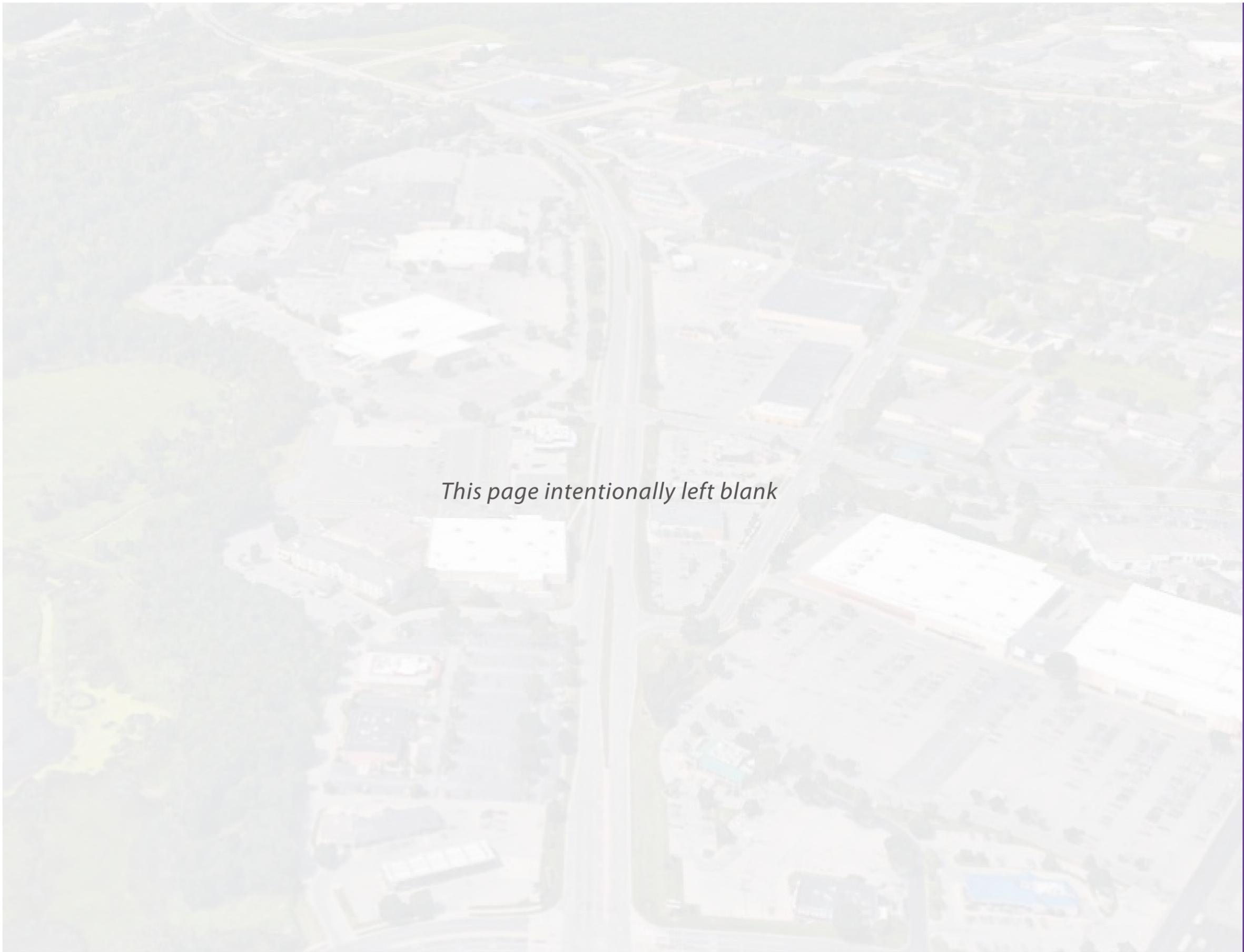
The LIHTC gives investors a dollar-for-dollar reduction in their federal tax liability in exchange for providing financing to develop affordable rental housing. Investors' equity contribution subsidizes low-income housing development, thus allowing some units to rent at below-market rates. In return, investors receive tax credits paid in annual allotments, generally over 10 years.

Financed projects must meet eligibility requirements for at least 30 years after project completion. In other words, owners must keep the units rent restricted and available to low-income tenants. At the end of the period, the properties remain under the control of the owner.

Achieving the Vision

In summary, the State Road 16 Corridor Redevelopment Study outlines an approach for positive, incremental redevelopment, reinvestment and intensification throughout the area over time. The plan outlines a series of achievable goals over the next ten to twenty years with potential redevelopment projects have a reality in the marketplace today and provide a true foundation for transformation.

While the Redevelopment Study prescribes a detailed redevelopment approach for specific projects and likely steps, the plan is also flexible in its application to allow the City of Onalaska to adapt to an ever-changing marketplace. The Redevelopment Study should be utilized as a living document, continually referenced and checked against as development and redevelopment projects occur over time.



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