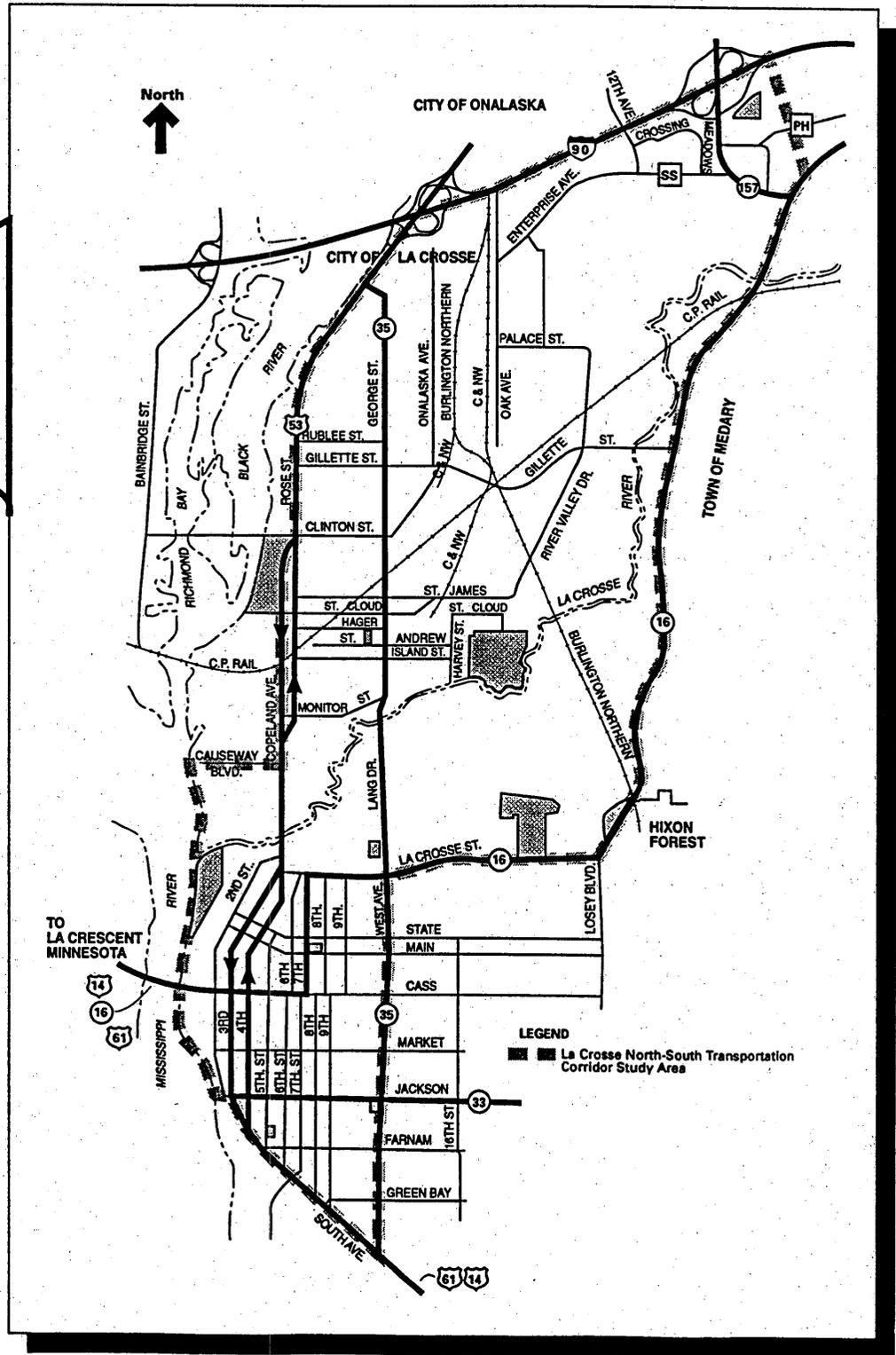
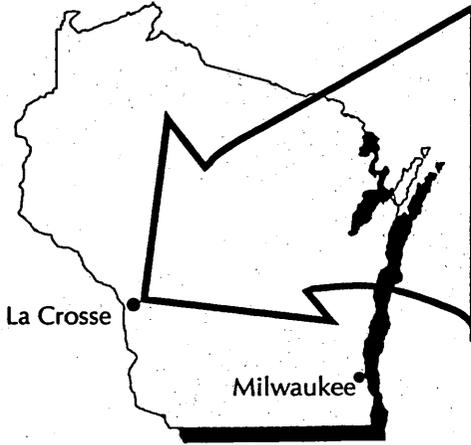


# LA CROSSE NORTH-SOUTH TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR STUDY LA CROSSE COUNTY

July 30  
1996



Greater  
**LA CROSSE AREA**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



# **NORTH-SOUTH TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR STUDY**

**TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS COMMISSION  
JULY 30, 1996**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>1996-97 EIS/TPC MILESTONE SCHEDULE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ENHANCING WISCONSIN'S ECONOMY</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>IMPROVING HIGHWAY SERVICE</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>IMPROVING HIGHWAY SAFETY</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>MINIMIZING UNDESIRABLE IMPACTS</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>SERVING COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>33</b>

**Presented by:**

**Greater La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce  
Downtown Mainstreet, Inc.  
La Crosse Area Development Corp.**

# LA CROSSE NORTH-SOUTH TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR STUDY

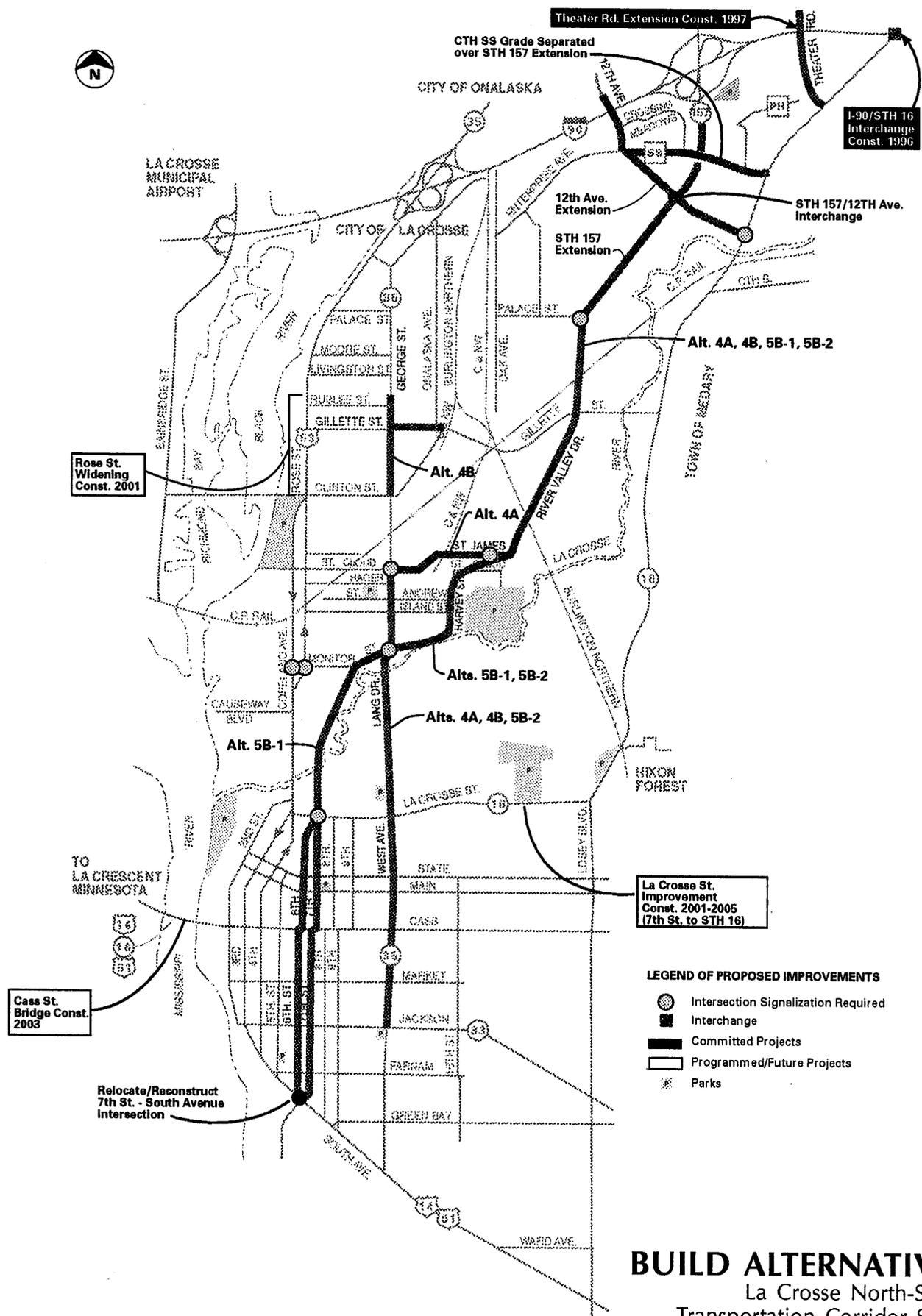
## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) PROCESS and TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS COMMISSION (TPC) PROCESS

### 1996-97 MILESTONE SCHEDULE

#### EIS Process

#### TPC Process

	<i>TPC Public Hearing-Green Bay. The Project "Concept" is presented to the TPC. No Alternative has been recommended.</i>	<i>July 30</i>
August 21	Public Information Meeting #4 to present summary of impacts, analyses and alternatives; preview of the contents of the DEIS.	
Early September	Release Draft EIS-Begin Public and Agency Review	
	<i>DOT recommends to TPC which candidate projects to carry forward based on internal analyses of the projects by DOT (transportation), DOD (economic), and DNR (environmental).</i>	<i>September 13</i>
Early October	Public Hearing to solicit comments on DEIS and Alternatives.	
Early November	End Public Review Period	
	<i>TPC Recommendation to the Legislature. Project "Concept" is recommended for enumeration.</i>	<i>December 15</i>
1997	<b>Select Recommended Alternative</b> based upon public and agency comment and impact analyses.	
1997	City Council votes on Recommendation	
1997	Prepare Final EIS to document the Recommendation.	
1997	Record of Decision	



# BUILD ALTERNATIVES

La Crosse North-South  
Transportation Corridor Study

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed project is located in the City of La Crosse, in the southwestern portion of La Crosse County. The study area for the *La Crosse North-South Transportation Corridor Study* is bordered by IH-90 on the north, USH 53 on the west, STH 16 on the east (north of La Crosse Street), STH 35/West Avenue on the east (south of La Crosse Street), and USH 14/61 (South Avenue) on the south.

### PURPOSE AND NEED

The proposed action evaluates alternatives for providing additional north-south transportation capacity between IH-90 and downtown La Crosse to meet long-range travel demand and forecast traffic increases in year 2020.

The *purpose* of the proposed action includes the following elements:

- Provide transportation system improvements that accommodate future growth and associated increases in travel demand, and that address existing and future transportation deficiencies.
- Integrate land use and transportation planning (including corridor preservation) to ensure long-term compatibility between meeting travel demand, protecting environmental resources, and fostering economic viability.
- Provide transportation system improvements that take into account and are compatible with the contribution of bus and bicycle transportation toward addressing overall transportation demand.

The *need* for the proposed action includes a combination of factors relating to long-term transportation and land use planning, problems and deficiencies on the existing roadway network, local community interests, and modal interrelationships.

The *La Crosse North-South Transportation Corridor Study* is the final step in selecting the appropriate transportation element that will be incorporated into adopted *La Crosse River Valley Study Land Use Plan*, the *La Crosse Area General Plan* update, and the *La Crosse Area Long-Range Transportation Plan*.

### FORECASTS

Year 2020 traffic forecasts on the existing north-south roadways in the study area indicate the following trends:

- Traffic on USH 53 is expected to increase by an average of 26 percent, with volumes ranging from 32,800 to 38,400. Without additional corridor capacity, six segments along USH 53 will exceed Design Capacity (Level of Service C), and three will exceed Maximum Capacity (Level of Service E).
- Traffic on STH 35 is expected to increase by an average of 18 percent, with volumes ranging from 15,100 to 33,500. Without additional corridor capacity, six segments along STH 35 will exceed Design Capacity, and two segments will Exceed Maximum Capacity.
- Traffic on STH 16 is expected to increase by an average of 16 percent, with volumes ranging from 25,400 to 37,100. Without additional corridor capacity, five segments along STH 16 will exceed Design Capacity.
- Future truck traffic will remain substantial on the existing north-south roadways. Truck traffic on USH 53 is expected to reach 2,400 per day, a 70 percent increase over present volumes. Truck traffic on STH 35 is expected to reach 1,600 per day, a 20 percent increase over present volumes, and STH 16 will carry an average of 2,600 trucks per day, an 8 percent increase over present volumes.

### **EFFICIENCY**

- Transportation efficiency on USH 53 and STH 35 is substantially impaired by numerous signalized intersections, insufficient number of traffic lanes and turning lanes, on-street parking, and numerous access points.

### **SAFETY**

- During the three-year period 1993 through 1995, USH 53 had an accident rate that is 46 percent higher than the statewide average for urban arterial roadways. The accident rate on STH 35 was 110 percent higher than the statewide average rate.

### **ECONOMICS**

- Economic viability of existing businesses, and the potential for future economic benefits through redevelopment in the City of La Crosse, is strongly linked to an efficient transportation infrastructure. Major employers that rely on trucking to ship and receive products make over 600 truck trips per day through the *La Crosse North-South Transportation Corridor* study area. These businesses indicate a more efficient transportation system is critical to sustained viability, growth potential, and on-time delivery of services and products. Delays on the existing roadway network result in increased operational costs.

- Two major medical centers in La Crosse are the largest employers in the La Crosse Metropolitan Planning Area. These businesses indicate transportation improvements are needed to expedite emergency vehicle and out-patient access, and to enhance planned future expansion.

## **OTHER MODES**

Bus transit and bicycle transportation will continue to be viable components of the multi-modal transportation system in La Crosse, and will contribute to addressing transportation demand in the study area. Roadway capacity improvements are needed in conjunction with increased bus transit and bicycle transportation to fully address overall long-term transportation demand.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Based on the Major Investment Study (MIS) collaborative process for the *La Crosse North-South Transportation Corridor Study*, the following conclusions were drawn regarding development of appropriate transportation solutions for the City of La Crosse:

- The reasonable range of alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the MIS/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are highway-oriented (versus light rail or other fixed-guideway transportation modes), and where practicable, provide accommodations for enhancing bus transit and bicycle transportation.
- The highway-oriented alternatives include adding traffic capacity to existing roadway links, and constructing new roadway links between IH-90 and downtown La Crosse.

A wide range of initial alternatives was developed during the project's data gathering, public involvement, and agency coordination activities. The initial range of alternatives was screened and refined to those "reasonable" alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the MIS/Draft EIS.

### ***Alternative No. 1 -- No Build***

Under the No Build Alternative, no highway capacity or transit improvement would be made. Although this alternative is not considered a reasonable course of action for addressing long-term transportation demand in the La Crosse community, it serves as the baseline for comparison to the reasonable Build Alternatives.

### ***Alternative No. 4 -- Congestion Management Measures (CMM)***

This alternative mainly involves adding capacity to existing roadway links. A new roadway link is proposed in the area between IH-90 and the north end of existing River Valley Drive at Palace Street. This is common to all of the reasonable Build Alternatives.

## ***Alternative No. 5 -- New North-South Roadway***

Alternative No. 5 is a combination of adding capacity to existing roadway links, and constructing new roadway links.

### **IMPACTS**

Primary impacts associated with the reasonable Build Alternatives include residential and business relocations, wetland impacts, new or expanded crossings of the La Crosse River, and socioeconomic impacts.

- 44-61 residential displacements, 16-23 business displacements
- 2.7 acres to 17.0 acres of wetlands
- 3-5 threatened species locations
- new river crossing, widened crossing, or channel modification
- no parklands, no apparent archaeological sites
- 6-8 historic properties
- 14-28 potential hazardous materials sites
- \$40.1 - \$57.4 construction costs
- \$11.7 - 15.4 real estate costs

## TRIP GENERATION CHARACTERISTICS

The key trip generation characteristics that influence future traffic volumes on particular highways include:

- total trips will increase by about 24 percent in year 2020
- total daily vehicle miles will increase by about 35 percent
- total daily vehicle hours will increase by about 59 percent
- average travel speed will be reduced by about 16 percent.

CHARACTERISTIC	BASE YEAR (1994)	PLAN YEAR (2020)	PERCENT CHANGE
Population	97,600	117,360	+ 20
Employment	52,720	71,140	+ 35
Dwelling Units	41,500	48,630	+ 17
Auto Availability	61,640	73,520	+ 19
Autos/Dwelling Unit	1.49	1.51	Negligible
Autos/Person	0.63	0.63	Negligible
Daily Trips/Dwelling Unit	12.14	12.83	Negligible
Daily Trips/Person	5.16	5.32	Negligible
Total Trips	504,000	624,100	+24
Total Daily Vehicle Miles	2,159,000	2,907,286	+35
Total Daily Vehicle Hours	77,690	123,190	+59
Average Travel Speed	45 km/h (28 mph)	38 km/h (24 mph)	-16

## TRIP DISTRIBUTION CHARACTERISTICS

The key trip distribution characteristics that influence future traffic assignments on particular highways include the following:

- travel patterns are expected to remain stable between 1994 and 2020
- the highest percentage of total trips (64 percent in year 2020) is due to interzonal trips--those made between the TAZs that comprise the transportation service area
- the second highest percentage of total trips (20 percent in year 2020) is due to external/internal trips--those originating outside the transportation service area and that have destinations within the service area.

CHARACTERISTICS	BASE YEAR (1994)	PLAN YEAR (2020)
Intrazonal Trips <sup>1</sup> % of Total Trips	31,100 6%	37,600 6%
Interzonal Trips <sup>2</sup> % of Total Trips	344,100 68%	398,400 64%
External/External Trips <sup>3</sup> % of Total Trips	44,200 9%	65,800 10%
External/Internal Trips <sup>4</sup> % of Total Trips	84,600 17%	122,300 20%
<b>Total Trips</b>	<b>504,000</b>	<b>624,100</b>

**Notes:**

1. Intrazonal trips are those made entirely within the smaller geographic area of a particular TAZ.
2. Interzonal trips are those made between the TAZs within the transportation service (planning) area.
3. External/External trips are "through trips" that pass entirely through the transportation service area without stopping in a particular TAZ.
4. External/Internal trips are those that originate outside the transportation service area, but have destinations within the service area (traveling to one or more TAZs).

# ENHANCING WISCONSIN'S ECONOMY

## *QUICK FACTS*

- AS A RESULT OF EXTENDING AN ADDITIONAL CORRIDOR TO LA CROSSE'S SOUTHSIDE:
  - 200 ACRES OF DEVELOPABLE PROPERTY WILL BE SERVED IN THE LA CROSSE RIVER VALLEY LEADING TO ADDITIONAL TAX BASE OF AT LEAST \$50 MILLION
  - THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD) WILL ENJOY A SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER PATH TO THE IH-90 THUS ENABLING THE FULFILLMENT OF CITY VISION 2000, A REDEVELOPMENT PLAN THAT ENVISIONS \$110 MILLION IN NEW INVESTMENT IN THE CBD
  - LARGE SOUTHSIDE EMPLOYERS WHO EMPLOY THOUSANDS AND HAVE MADE HUGE INVESTMENTS WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO BUILD AND GROW THERE

## ENHANCING WISCONSIN'S ECONOMY

New development and retention of important La Crosse businesses are the prime objectives achieved with an additional corridor to La Crosse's southside. In ten or more years, without the new corridor, the movement of people and product for existing southside companies will be severely compromised and the new development of significant tracts of property will have been frustrated.

Three areas south of IH-90 will benefit greatly with a significantly better link to the Interstate:

① **LA CROSSE RIVER VALLEY** - As a result of the first segment of a new corridor, from IH-90 to Gillette Street, flood proofing from the La Crosse River will lead to further economic opportunity. The corridor...

- Will enable the development of up to an 80 acre industrial park by the City of La Crosse which will lead to an estimated addition of \$35 million in property tax base.
- Will improve direct access to IH-90 for two existing industrial areas, the Interstate and Coulee Sites Industrial Parks, that currently host dozens of industries with millions in tax value and thousands of employees.
- Will enable development of an additional 120 acres of commercial property in the La Crosse River Valley as agreed to in the La Crosse River Valley Land Use Plan.

② **CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT** - As a result of extending the corridor further--to Midtown La Crosse--a significantly better route to IH-90 and the metro area north of the Interstate will greatly enhance the success of City Vision 2000, a major downtown re-investment plan being undertaken by the private sector and the City of La Crosse. City Vision 2000...

- ➡ Will increase the Central Business District (CBD) tax base by \$110 million over the life of the project. In the last three years alone, over \$18 million in new investment has been made by the private sector.
- ➡ Will create central city and riverfront housing opportunities and greatly expand the residential base in this area by creation of housing opportunities for all people regardless of income. In fact, there are plans for growth of 700 to 800 housing units over the life of the plan.
- ➡ Will increase the total employment in the CBD from its current level of 7,000 to 14,000 over the life of the plan...doubling the CBD's employment size. For example, over 55 acres of developable property could come into development on open tracts or as part of brownfield reclamation.
- ➡ Will continue to develop the CBD as being a major destination point for the region and state citizens and visitors. This area is the center for all regional government, financial, health, education institutions and a major recreational, entertainment and tourism destination. In or near the CBD are: three major institutions of higher education with over 18,000 students; the recently approved Health Science Center (a consortium of partners to retain La Crosse as one of Wisconsin's three top centers for medical education--Viterbo College, Western Wisconsin Technical College, UW-La Crosse, Franciscan-Skemp Medical Center, and Gundersen-Lutheran Medical Center); city, county and federal administrative centers employing nearly 3,000.

③ **SOUTH LA CROSSE** - A new corridor that extends all the way to the far southside will signal to major southside employers that a safe movement of employees and customers can be counted on in the future and that the efficient movement of product can be accomplished for the future. Such a corridor...

➡ Will encourage major southside employers like Postalsoft, who could produce their product anywhere in the USA, to make a major headquarters facility decision favorable to La Crosse.

➡ Will enable other southside employers to continue to grow at their present locations. Seven companies alone - TRANE, Dairyland Power, G. Heilemen Brewery, Franciscan-Skemp Medical Center, Century Telephone, Gundersen-Lutheran Medical Center and Postalsoft - employ over 12,000 people now and certainly look forward to substantial growth in 10 years.

➡ Will facilitate the development of Waterford Valley on USH 14, where over 240 acres will host 250 homes with an addition of over \$50 million in tax base.

➡ Will allow other existing small businesses and commercial outlets on the far southside to prosper in what is now not a dynamic environment for small business. Also, parcels like the 5-acre site near Gundersen-Lutheran and the 9-acre Gerke parcel on Mormon Coulee Road, to date undeveloped, will come into commercial development more rapidly.

If the above development and retention opportunities haven't crystallized the economic importance of the area south of IH-90, then perhaps these simple facts will:

- ▣▶ that 60,100 people, or 65% of the people living in the metro area, are south of IH-90
- ▣▶ that 40,614 people, or 78% of the metro area civilian labor force, work at businesses or institutions south of IH-90

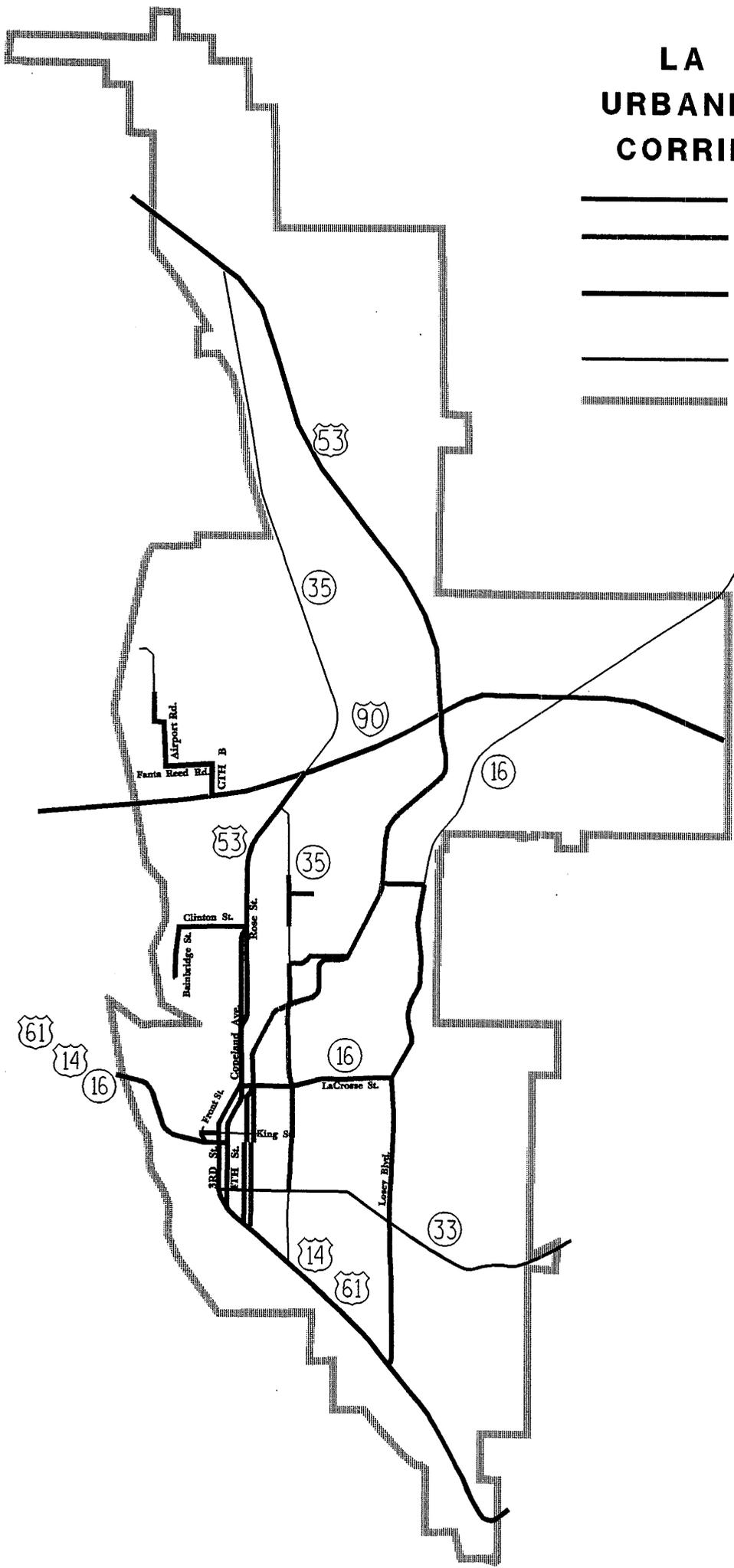
Finally, this. It is said by some that extending a corridor to the far southside exacts too great a toll on neighborhoods. If one is to weigh the questions of neighborhoods in a comprehensive perspective, then one has to ask these questions too:

- What would several neighborhoods on La Crosse's southside look like if, for instance, TRANE was forced to relocate?
- Where in the estimations of the "damage" to neighborhoods has the benefit of an entire "new neighborhood"--from hundreds who will make downtown La Crosse their new home--been added back in?

When all is said and done, a SAFE and EFFICIENT corridor will preserve and help grow the economy of La Crosse, which is, in the end, a key to any neighborhood and community preservation effort.

# LA CROSSE URBANIZED AREA CORRIDOR PLAN

-  EXISTING MAJOR CORRIDORS
-  INCOMPLETE BUILD ALTERNATIVES FOR THE NORTH - SOUTH CORRIDOR
-  NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM ROUTE (INCLUDES I-90 AND USH 53)
-  NON-NHS ROUTE
-  URBANIZED AREA BOUNDARY



□ OUR VIEW: Highway planning

# Keep north-south road option open

**T**he economic vitality of La Crosse's central business district and South Side is the issue at the heart of the debate over creating a new north-south highway corridor through the city.

The state puts together financial incentives to attract new, expanding and relocating businesses, and the federal government uses the arcana of the tax code to encourage capital formation and the creation of new business.

But the effectiveness and fairness of these relatively new state and federal government strategies for stoking up our economy remain open to debate. Instead, the fundamental oil of America's economic engine has remained the same throughout her existence — the building and maintenance of transportation infrastructure.

Critics of the planning process for this proposed highway have painted the debate as a struggle between good, plain folks against the interests of a few businesses: "quality of life" vs. the forces of mindless "progress."

Here is the quality-of-life argument in favor of keeping our options open for making La Crosse's South Side and Central business district more accessible to Interstate 90, the most important transportation hub in western Wisconsin.

Can La Crosse survive, quality of life intact, as a bedroom community for the burgeoning Valley View Mall area? No. Will our quality of life be endangered by a declining economy and stagnant property values on La Crosse's South Side? Absolutely.

That will be the inevitable outcome if we ignore the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's traffic studies that show a gradual but inexorable increase in drive time between Onalaska and the South Side.

And the changing dynamics of a central business district designed to be a destination point must be served with an adequate infrastructure.

Is La Crosse experiencing critical north-south gridlock today? Of course not. But ask the businesses on Muddy Flats about I-90 access at 8 a.m. or

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4 p.m. Some of those businesses and others on the South Side eventually will be forced to relocate, and new and expanding businesses will think twice about La Crosse's potential building sites on the far South Side as long as it's clear the potential traffic problems aren't being addressed.

The U.S. economy began as a multitude of tiny, highly insular local economies. It has evolved into huge, competing regional economies. If La Crosse cuts off the option of a new north-south corridor, it will, in effect, be attempting to buck a 200-year-old trend by cutting itself off from a region that is competing with the Chippewa Valley and Rochester, among others.

And it will fail. In fact, by insulating itself from the Hwy. 16/I-90 interchange, La Crosse could diminish the potential of the entire regional economy.

Is this an unequivocal endorsement of a particular plan?

No. It's impossible to know that circumstances won't change or that we can't come up with a solution that will be less disruptive and/or more effective than those already considered.

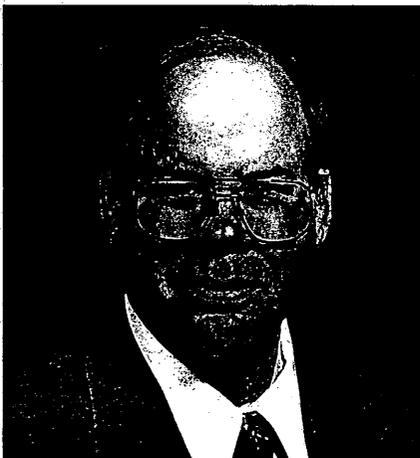
But La Crosse can't afford to ignore what in the end might be the only way to ensure its long-term vitality. The issue of planning for a new north-south highway is not one of economic opportunity vs. quality of life, for they are inextricably entwined. In fact, prematurely killing the option of building a new road could endanger both.

# Taking Off The Gloves

*La Crosse health-care providers cooperate  
to build the Health Science Center*

BY HOWARD BELL

*Dr. Martin Venneman*



**S**OME THINGS WORK SO well, they surprise even those who struggled to make them happen. That's how UW-La Crosse Associate Dean Dr. Martin Venneman feels about a consortium of La Crosse employers building a Health Science Center that will keep La Crosse one of Wisconsin's three top centers for medical education.

"I look back," Venneman says, "and wonder how we got this far. Then I realize, there's nothing we can't do."

Viterbo College, Western Wisconsin Technical College (WWTC), UW-La Crosse, Franciscan Skemp Healthcare and Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center are partners in the La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium Inc. That's right — partners. Colleges that compete for students. Hospitals and clinics that compete for patients — all rising above the competitive fray. Together,

they employ 10,000 people, one of every seven employable persons in La Crosse County, Wisconsin, and Houston County, Minnesota.

The Center will benefit Consortium members big time. Self-interest aside, the Center will create jobs throughout the Coulee Region in 20 health-care fields, improve access to health care, especially in rural areas, boost La Crosse's stature as a medical research and training center and potentially attract new medical-technology firms to the area. The Center will bring a lot of money into the region, says Dr. Lee Rasch, President of Western Wisconsin Technical College and a Consortium board member. Business will be the primary benefactor.

How a six-story building will do all this takes some explaining; but first, some financial background. Wisconsin's Initiative For State Technology & Applied

Research (WISTAR) is picking up most of the \$26.8 million tab. The Consortium must pay back half over 20 years. The other half is a grant. To pay back its share, the Consortium will provide \$1.75 million in land and equipment. Grants and private foundations will cover \$8 million of the match. In a referendum last March, property owners in the 11-county region served by WWTC agreed to pay \$3.65 million. Property tax bills will increase \$2.23 for a home worth \$75,000. Voters supported the measure by an impressive two-to-one margin.

It's easy to demonstrate taxpayer value for the dollar, according to Rasch. "We already know the \$3.65 million will bring \$27 million to La Crosse," he says.

Venneman estimates by the year 2000 the Center will contribute \$5 million annually to the region's economy. Not a bad return for a \$3.65 million investment. Using economic-benefit multipliers, construction alone will contribute \$47.2 million in sales and salaries. Five years after the Center opens, it will increase annual sales in La Crosse County by \$2.5 million.

Venneman says the Center will not produce an explosive hiring of people. The point, he says, is to save money by increasing efficiencies in medical education and train professionals who are in high demand but short supply. Within five years, however, the Center will hire 15 people with combined salaries of \$675,000, not including fringes.

**R** AISING \$8 MILLION OF the WISTAR match will not be easy, according to Venneman. "But the money's out there," he says. The National Institute of Health and the National Science Foundation were interested in contributing before the Consortium was even ready to accept.

"Government and private foundations like to see businesses step out of the ring to cooperate on projects that benefit the whole region," Venneman says. "Yet we know of no other group like ours in the nation." The Consortium's cooperative style was part of what attracted WISTAR money, which usually funds projects in Madison and Milwaukee.

The Health Science Center's 144,000 square feet will house medical-education classrooms and laboratories, a learning-disability center and a student-health clinic shared by 14,000 students from all three colleges. Architectural planning started in spring. Construction begins summer of '97.

The Consortium will own and operate the Center. Venneman will oversee day-to-day operations as the Consortium's executive director. Consortium members will split the cost of operating and maintaining the building based on their percent of use. At the same time, the Consortium is adamant about not divid-

and boost efficiencies because managed health-care organizations, like HMOs, limit treatment reimbursements. One way hospitals and clinics work smarter is to rely on teams of allied health professionals, who, with physician supervision, provide much of the patient's care. These are the nurses; the physical and occupa-



**“We’re breaking down artificial barriers... the Center lets us share staff and classrooms. There’s no net increase in labor costs.”**

—Dr. Lee Rasch,  
president,  
Western Wisconsin Technical College

ing the building into little proprietary enclaves. Consortium members are equal partners and have equal say in how the Center is used.

"We didn't just decide to build a building," Venneman says. "First came the need."

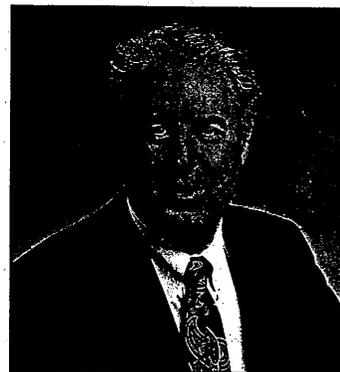
Hospitals and clinics need to cut costs

tional therapists; the surgical, medical and radiology technologists and about 15 other professions that keep hospitals and clinics running. Demand for these people is so great, hospitals and clinics, especially rural ones, can't get enough of them. La Crosse's three colleges train them all, but they can't train them fast

## 'integrity and professionalism'

**I**f your organization is forced to downsize, you really need to be able to trust the organization you're working with ... you need to trust that they're going to be able to handle the situation well.

We've worked very closely with Career Development Group on executive outplacement and know we can trust them to handle the situation with professionalism and integrity."



Mike Speer, Senior Vice  
President of Human Resources,  
United Health Group

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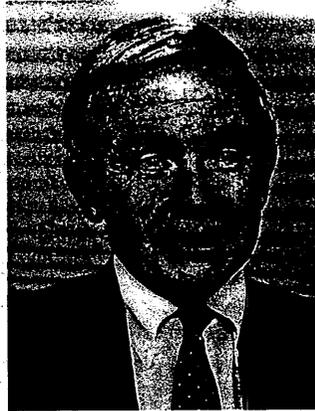
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## Rural Learning Links

The Health Science Center is the Consortium's most prominent project, but by no means the only economic-development entrée on its plate. Take the telecommunications/distance learning project. The Consortium will link its 31 branch campuses and satellite clinics with interactive video technology. Students will attend classes from their home towns, which makes it more likely they will practice their profession there, thus alleviating the rural health-care worker shortage.

Patients and doctors will receive 2-way interactive medical consultations at their home town clinics. By cooperating, Consortium members avoid duplication expense, plus they can afford to install a more sophisticated network.



“People with new ideas came (to Minneapolis) because they were attracted by collaboration between education and business. We'd like to see that happen here.”

— Dr. Brian Campion,  
president/CEO,  
Franciscan Skemp Healthcare

enough because they've outgrown classroom space. Venneman says a new shared building will cut in half the cost to expand allied health programs.

Creating space to train more health-care professionals who will spend their prime earning and spending years in the Coulee Region is part of the Center's purpose. The Center will also train them

to better meet the precise needs of the hospitals and clinics that will eventually employ them.

“For the first time in the region's history,” says Venneman, “education is directly responsive to the needs of major employers.”

Here's how it will work.

Hospitals and clinics need allied health professionals trained to work together in interdisciplinary teams — physical therapists with occupational therapists, for example. Yet, colleges have not traditionally trained them to work together. In Health Science Center classrooms and laboratories, students from all three campuses pursuing various health careers will attend some of the same classes and share some lab time — WWTC's Med Lab Tech students with UW-L's Med Tech students, for example.

“We're breaking down artificial barriers,” says Rasch. “We're asking ourselves, ‘What's the best way to train professionals in these fields?’ In addition, the Center lets us share staff and classrooms. There's no net increase in labor costs.”

Says Venneman, “This is innovative stuff. We cannot do this now and we would not be able to do it without the Health Science Center.”

**M**ANY ALLIED HEALTH professionals trained at the Health Science Center will work in small towns, in the 11 western Wisconsin counties designated health professional shortage areas. The result: People earning good wages will live and spend in small towns. Rural residents get better access to health care. Recruitment of rural physicians gets easier because physicians like to practice where they have well-trained support

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staff. Small-town economies stabilize and become more self-supporting. La Crosse's medical centers get a steady supply of health professionals trained to work in today's managed-care environment.

"We want to train our young people," says Dr. Philip Dahlberg, president of Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center and a Consortium board member. "Hiring from outside the region is expensive and a disadvantage to our young people who need jobs."

"Demand for allied health professionals is unbelievable," says Venneman. "We have seven jobs waiting for every physician assistant we train."

Physician assistants earn an average salary of \$49,500. Occupational therapists start at \$34,000. Other average starting salaries for allied health professionals range between \$24,000-\$34,000. At a time when we're worried about becoming a nation of burger flippers, La Crosse's Health Science Center will train health professionals who earn living wages. By 2015, labor-intensive health care is expected to be Wisconsin's largest employer. By building the Center, the Consortium will position an entire region for the economic realities to come.

Research at the Health Science Center will be applied, which means results should have some immediate practical value, so medical and bio-tech firms may locate nearby because of it.

"We'll research the best combination of services for treating patients," says Dr. Brian Campion, president/CEO of Franciscan Skemp Healthcare. Research will also be done on immunology, viruses and lifestyles and behaviors which improve a person's health.

"UW-L's exercise physiology program has a national reputation for research," says Campion. "We'll certainly build on that. Just drive around Minneapolis by the University. You'll see all sorts of little bio-tech shops which located there because of the area's health-care reputation. People with new ideas came because they were attracted by collaboration between education and business. We'd like to see that happen here."

How do businesses that normally compete with each other cooperate so effectively? "It usually blows people's minds," says Venneman. "How can you agree on anything?" they ask. Everything is done with 100 percent approval of the members. We share a great spirit of cooperation and compromise. What we are able to achieve as a group is well worth changing our corporate policies and philosophies for."

The Consortium board relies on a small army of Coulee Region business leaders, who Venneman says are "passionately committed to the economic vitality of our region." All sit on various steering committees assigned to research a specific issue and report back with concrete recommendations.

"We have an impressive level of cooperation among a tremendous pool of talent," says WWTC's Rasch.

Self interest binds the Consortium together. "Its mission contributes to our own mission," says Dahlberg. "We can also take pride in accomplishing something good for the region."

Says Campion, "From a practical standpoint, the cost of duplicating services is so severe, we have to look at ways of cooperating."

It's hard to say what's more novel: the Health Science Center or the Consortium which has accomplished what others talk about, but seldom achieve. "The only way it works," says Venneman, "is for each member to have a concern for and sensitivity to the needs of their competitors. That's unusual to say the least, but it's key to our success." GW

*Bell is a freelance writer based in Onalaska.*



Governor  
Tommy Thompson

"Wisconsin is a national leader in recycling. We need to make certain that Wisconsin Businesses know how to use their resources and obtain the information they need to purchase recycled products and sustain recycling efforts into the next century. Therefore, I urge you to join the Wisconsin Chapter of the Buy Recycled Business Alliance."

*Tommy Thompson*

## Join the Wisconsin Businesses who have joined WBRBA.

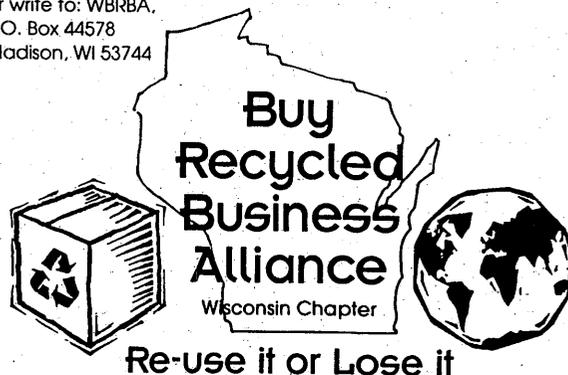
WBRBA is a broad based, non-profit group of Wisconsin Businesses and Organizations formed by Wisconsin business leaders, and funded by the Recycling Market Development Board. WBRBA is dedicated to making recycling work for all Wisconsin businesses and organizations.

### Members benefit from:

- Locator Guidebook
- Newsletters • Networking
- Workshops & Seminars
- Use of the WBRBA logo in member literature and packaging!

WBRBA Membership is good for your business, good for your community, good for Wisconsin, good for the planet  
— good for you!

For more information or membership materials, contact the WBRBA today at: 608/277-1922 FAX 608/277-9266 or write to: WBRBA, P.O. Box 44578 Madison, WI 53744



Re-use it or Lose it

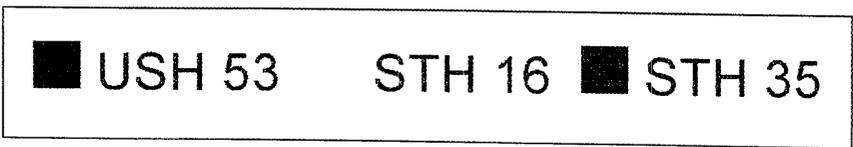
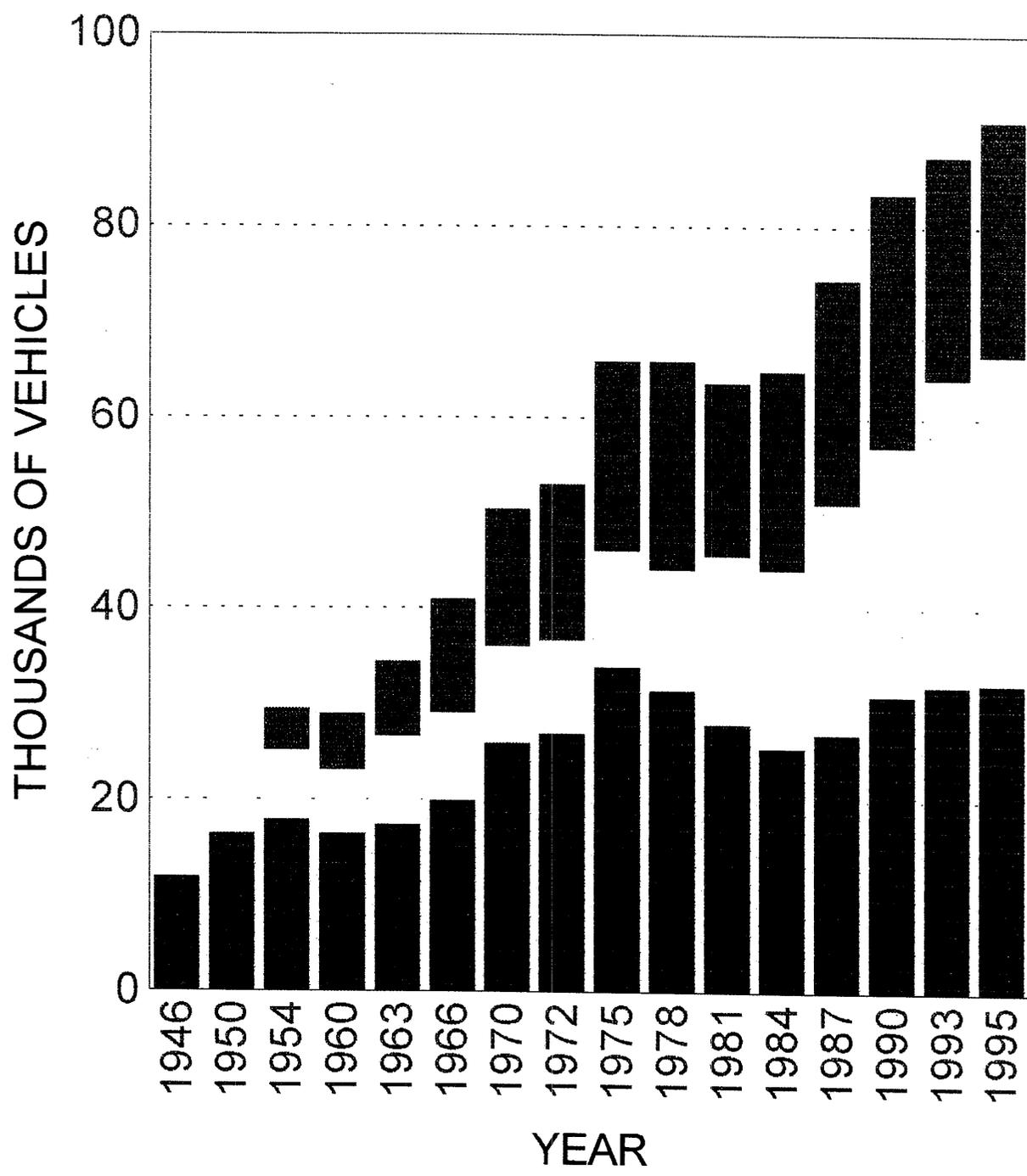
# IMPROVING HIGHWAY SERVICE

## *QUICK FACTS*

- NORTH-SOUTH TRAFFIC CURRENTLY TOTALS 92,500 VEHICLES PER DAY
- NORTH-SOUTH ARTERIALS HAVE EXCEEDED THEIR DESIGN CAPACITY

# HISTORIC AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

## LA CROSSE NORTH-SOUTH HIGHWAYS



## TRAFFIC FORECASTS

- USH 53      PRESENT ADT VOLUMES EXCEED DESIGN CAPACITY  
                  MAXIMUM CAPACITY IS EXPECTED TO BE REACHED IN 2010
- STH 35      PRESENT ADT VOLUMES ARE NEAR DESIGN CAPACITY  
                  MAXIMUM CAPACITY IS EXPECTED TO BE REACHED IN 2015
- STH 16      PRESENT ADT VOLUMES EXCEED DESIGN CAPACITY  
                  MAXIMUM CAPACITY IS EXPECTED TO BE REACHED BY 2020

- ➡ Future ADT volumes on USH 53 are expected to increase by an average of 26 percent. Volumes will range from 30,100 near Gillette Street, to 38,900 on the Rose Street/Copeland Avenue one-way street pair south of Clinton Street. This represents an increase of 5,600 and 6,700 respectively over present volumes.
- ➡ Future ADT volumes on STH 35 are expected to increase by an average of 18 percent. Volumes will range from 15,100 south of IH-90 to 33,500 on Lang Drive north of La Crosse Street. Volumes on the segment just south of IH-90 are expected to remain constant. Volumes on the Lang Drive segment are expected to increase by 10,300.
- ➡ Future ADT volumes on STH 16 are expected to increase by an average of 16 percent. Volumes will range from 25,400 south of IH-90 to 37,100 north of Gillette Street. This represents an increase of 6,200 and 5,200 respectively over present volumes.
- ➡ Future truck traffic on the three major north-south roadways in the study area will continue to be substantial. On its highest traffic segment, USH 53 is expected to carry an average of 2,400 trucks per day, STH 35 an average of 1,600 trucks per day, and STH 16 an average of 2,600 trucks per day.
- ➡ Even with a 100 percent increase in transit and bicycle use, highway capacity will still be exceeded.

## EFFECTS OF INTERSECTION DELAY ON TRAVEL TIME COSTS

Although intersection delay may be perceived as tolerable by individual drivers traveling on USH 53, STH 35, and STH 16 during P.M. peak hours, the overall magnitude and cost of these delays on an annual basis is substantial.

- ▶ The total annual intersection delay under today's traffic is about 69,300 hours. This will increase to about 174,000 in year 2020--a 150 percent increase.
- ▶ This intersection delay alone accounts for approximately \$600,000 in annual user (travel time) costs under today's traffic. This cost will increase by 150 percent in year 2020, to approximately \$1,500,000. The increase in annual delay costs for individual intersections ranges between 160 percent and 490 percent.

# IMPROVING HIGHWAY SAFETY

## *QUICK FACT*

- THE ACCIDENT RATES ON USH 53 AND STH 35 ARE CONSIDERABLY HIGHER THAN THE STATEWIDE AVERAGE.

## ACCIDENT HISTORY

- During the three-year period (1993-1995), USH 53 experienced the highest number of accidents with a total of 754. Approximately 60 percent occurred at intersections.
- STH 35 experienced a total of 738 accidents, 60 percent occurring at intersections.
- STH 16 experienced a total of 278 accidents, 40 percent occurring at intersections.
- The accident rate for USH 53 is 46 percent higher than the statewide average rate.
- The accident rate for STH 35 is 110 percent higher than the statewide average rate.
- Numerous access points (over 200 on each), and roadway geometry (undivided 2-lane and 4-lane segments) along USH 53 and STH 35 contribute to the high accident rates on these roadways.

# MINIMIZING UNDESIRABLE IMPACTS

## *QUICK FACTS*

- NO OTHER COMMUNITY CONCERN HAS ENJOYED A GREATER AMOUNT OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, AND SCRUTINY OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS
- GOAL - CHOOSE A PREFERRED SOLUTION THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, AND WHICH BALANCES OVERALL SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY

## TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR PLANNING

Since the inception of the La Crosse River Valley Study in 1988 to determine the appropriate land use and transportation plan for the La Crosse River Valley and adjacent area, and the recent North-South Transportation Corridor Study, there have been:

100+ public meetings

300+ newspaper articles including headlines

Thousands of work hours by staff and the public

Technical studies that encompass:

traffic modelling

hydraulic/floodplain studies

wetland inventories

fauna and flora inventories

water resources inventories

fisheries inventories

historical inventories

economic base studies

archaeological inventories

geomorphological inventories

noise studies

air quality studies

recreation inventories

interchange studies

relocation studies

# NORTH-SOUTH TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR STUDY

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

First Strategic Team Meeting	April 18, 1995
Newsletter #1	May, 1995
Second Strategic Team Meeting	May 22, 1995
First Public Information Meeting	May 25, 1995
Third Strategic Team Meeting	August 10, 1995
Newsletter #2	September, 1995
Second Public Information Meeting	September 13, 1995
Local Information Center #1	September 14, 1995
Agency Scoping Meeting U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service WisDNR State Historical Society	October 5, 1995 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Federal Highway Administration
STH 157/CTH SS Interchange Workshop	November 28, 1995
Focus Group Meetings U.S. Postal Service CTH SS & CTH PH residents CTH SS & CTH PH businesses George St. residents/businesses St. Andrew residents/businesses Harvey St. residents/businesses Marsh Coalition/Sierra Club	December 4,5,6, 1995 Housing Authority School District Fire Department 5th, 6th, 7th St. residents 5th, 6th, 7th St. businesses CP Railroad Various area businesses
Focus Group Meetings Harvey St. (5B) residents/businesses St. Andrew (5A) residents/businesses	January 16, 1996 January 23, 1996
Newsletter #3	February, 1996
Fourth Strategic Team Meeting	February 15, 1996
Third Public Information Meeting	March 6, 1996
Local Information Center #2	March 7, 1996
Focus Group Meeting West Avenue residents/businesses	June 18, 1996
Newsletter #4	July, 1996
STH 157/CTH SS Interchange Workshop	July 23, 1996
Fifth Strategic Team Meeting	August 14, 1996
Focus Group Meeting CTH SS & PH/mall area residents/bus.	August 14, 1996
Fourth Public Information Meeting	August 21, 1996

## MEASURES TO MINIMIZE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF REASONABLE BUILD ALTERNATIVES

It is recognized that a North-South Corridor Project will have impacts: social, economic, and environmental. It is the goal to minimize those impacts that will occur as a result of the Project. Many impacts already have been eliminated and/or minimized as a result of alternative modifications.

### ***NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUSINESS IMPACTS***

The Reasonable Build Alternatives impact various neighborhoods/areas within the corridor by necessitating the relocation of residences and businesses:

- Harvey Street neighborhood
- Lang Dr. area
- West Ave./La Crosse St. intersection area
- George St./Gillette St. intersection area
- 7th St./La Crosse St. intersection area
- 6th & 7th Sts./Cass St. intersection area
- 7th St./South Ave. intersection area

No person or business would be displaced unless a comparable replacement dwelling, business location, or other compensations (when a suitable replacement business location is not available) would be provided. Compensation is available to all displaced persons without discrimination.

### ***WETLANDS***

Because of the extensive wetlands in the study area, it is not possible to completely avoid wetlands. However, the range of Build Alternatives was developed to minimize wetland impacts where practicable, and in accordance with potentially acceptable wetland impacts as acknowledged during evaluation of transportation element alternatives for the *La Crosse River Valley Study*.

#### ***Minimize Wetland Impacts***

In the **IH-90 to Gillette Street Segment**, all of the Build Alternatives utilize existing River Valley Drive between Palace and Gillette Streets. Use of an existing roadway corridor minimizes wetland impacts, as opposed to new roadway alignment.

In the **Gillette Street to Monitor Street Segment**, Alternatives 4A, 4B, and 5B-2 utilize existing River Valley Drive to St. James Street, which minimizes wetland impacts at new locations. Between St. James and Monitor Streets, Alternatives 4A and 4B avoid wetland impacts. Alternatives 5B-1 and 5B-2 cross Wetland area W-7 on the north side of the La Crosse River between STH 35 and Harvey Street. Most of this wetland would be bridged to minimize impact. Alternative No. 5B-1 passes along the north end of wetland area W-5 near Monitor Street. A retaining wall would be used to minimize

impact.

In the **Monitor Street to La Crosse Street Segment**, Alternatives 4A, 4B, and 5B-2 utilize existing Lang Drive which minimizes wetland impacts at new locations. Alternative No. 5B-1 follows along the Old BN Trail between wetland areas W-4 and W-5. Use of a bridge to span this area to minimize wetland impacts was considered. However, the cost would be prohibitive (\$13.6 million for a bridge versus 5.7 million for expanding the existing causeway fill). Alternative No. 5B-1 crosses the La Crosse River and River Trail in the area north of La Crosse Street. Use of a bridge that entirely spans the river and trail, will also minimize wetland impact.

### *Wetland Compensation*

WisDOT and DNR have begun a search for candidate wetland restoration sites. Two potential sites have been identified. This effort will continue during the project's engineering phases. Since the construction schedule is not imminent, it is expected that one or more suitable restoration sites will be located. Other compensation methods, such as enhancement of existing wetland areas, may also be considered.

### **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

A traffic management plan will be developed and implemented during future engineering project phases to ensure reasonably convenient access to residences, businesses, community services, and local roads during construction. The WisDOT will coordinate construction activities, sequencing, and traffic operations with local fire, police, and emergency rescue services to minimize delays during the construction period.

### **NOISE AND AIR QUALITY**

Impacts of traffic-generated noise on receivers affected by the reasonable Build Alternatives will be evaluated in more detail based on engineering design phase refinements and traffic conditions. Further evaluation, based on selection of a recommended alternative, will include final assessment of whether noise abatement is feasible or cost effective.

### **WATER QUALITY**

Coordination with DNR will continue during the project's engineering phases. This will include input on erosion control and structure plans, and construction scheduling to avoid critical fish spawning periods.

### **FLOODPLAIN AND HYDRAULICS**

Measures to mitigate floodplain and hydraulic impacts of the reasonable Build Alternatives are summarized as follows:

- In the **IH-90 to Gillette Street Segment**, the elevation of the Great River State Trail would be lowered, the levee along the west bank of the La Crosse River upstream from the Great River State Trail would be removed, and the area between the 12th Avenue extension and the La Crosse River would be graded to a maximum elevation of about 198 m (650 feet).
- In the **Monitor to La Crosse Street Segment**, additional culvert pipes would be placed under Lang Drive, and the length and waterway opening of the existing River Trail bridge would be increased.
- Structure sizing will be performed in accordance with State and federal guidelines regarding floodplain encroachment and hydraulic capacity.

### ***UPLAND HABITAT***

As noted earlier, the primary upland habitat that would be affected by the Build Alternatives is the wooded sapling (upland carr) area between CTH SS and the Great River State Trail. This area provides habitat for the Bell's Vireo, a State-listed threatened species. During evaluation of alternative land use plans for the *La Crosse River Valley Study*, the portion of agricultural land between the proposed STH 157 extension and the La Crosse River (south of the Great River State Trail) was identified as replacement habitat. This area will be managed for replacement of the wooded sapling (upland carr) upland community.

### ***THREATENED SPECIES***

In addition to the Bell's Vireo discussed above, the Build Alternatives have the potential for affecting wetland habitat that supports Great egret populations. During the project's engineering phases, WisDOT and DNR will review specific habitat areas to determine potential effects on this species. If required, mitigation measures will be developed and incorporated into the project plans and contract special provisions.

Use of bridges that span the La Crosse River channel and/or minimize in-stream pier construction, retaining walls, and appropriate construction methods in areas where channel modifications are required, would minimize the potential for water quality and habitat for the Speckled chub, River redhorse, and Blue sucker. In addition, use of strict erosion control measures and possible construction constraint periods to protect spawning, will provide further protection for these fish species.

# SERVING COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

## *QUICK FACT*

- THE NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR IS CONSISTENT WITH SIX INDEPENDENTLY PREPARED COMMUNITY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

## MEETING COMMUNITY PLANNING OBJECTIVES

### ***La Crosse River Valley Study (1995)***

In 1988, the *La Crosse River Valley Study* was initiated through a formal agreement between WisDOT, DNR, City of La Crosse, and La Crosse County to develop a mutually acceptable land use and transportation plan for the La Crosse River Valley. As a result of this effort, the La Crosse River Valley Land Use Plan (see attached map) was adopted in November, 1995.

➡ The Land Use Plan sets forth the community's goals and objectives for future economic development, natural resource preservation, and recreational facilities development in the La Crosse River Valley between CTH SS and La Crosse Street. It also identifies the conceptual transportation element in the area between Gillette Street and CTH SS.

The conceptual element includes extending STH 157 to meet existing River Valley Drive at Palace Street, extending 12th Avenue to STH 16, and a new interchange between STH 157 and 12th Avenue extensions. The transportation element between Gillette Street and La Crosse Street was separated out for further study in response to citizen and agency concerns about the extent and location of future roadway improvements.

### ***La Crosse Area Long-Range Transportation Plan***

Development of the *La Crosse Area Long-Range Transportation Plan* was started in 1994 by the LAPC, in response to the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). Intermin Highway and Transit Element, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Element have been adopted. The Highway Element will be finalized based on the results of the La Crosse North-South Transportation Corridor Study.

### ***La Crosse Downtown Central Transit Center Study (1994/1995)***

A possible future transit center in downtown La Crosse was initially identified as part of the *City Vision 2000 Master Plan*. In 1994, the City and the MTU commissioned a two-phase study for a new transit center.

The first study phase analyzed the need for a new transit transfer station in downtown La Crosse. Three scenarios ranging from a small, utilitarian center to a large, multi-purpose center were developed for consideration in the second study phase.

The second study phase dealt with site selection and conceptual design for a transit transfer center. The recommended site for the new transfer center is the area bounded by 3rd, 4th, and Vine Streets. The conceptual design based on a full-scale, multi-purpose center includes covered bus parking areas, a parking structure, interior and exterior waiting areas and facilities, and a retail mall.

### ***Comprehensive Plan, City of Onalaska (1994)***

This plan is the City of Onalaska's 20-year planning guide for land use decisions. Recommendations relevant to the *La Crosse North-South Transportation Corridor* study area include the following: City of Onalaska property in the vicinity of CTH SS is targeted for light industrial or commercial development; traffic handling improvements should be made in the vicinity of CTH SS, STH 157, and the STH 157/IH-90 interchange to serve future development.

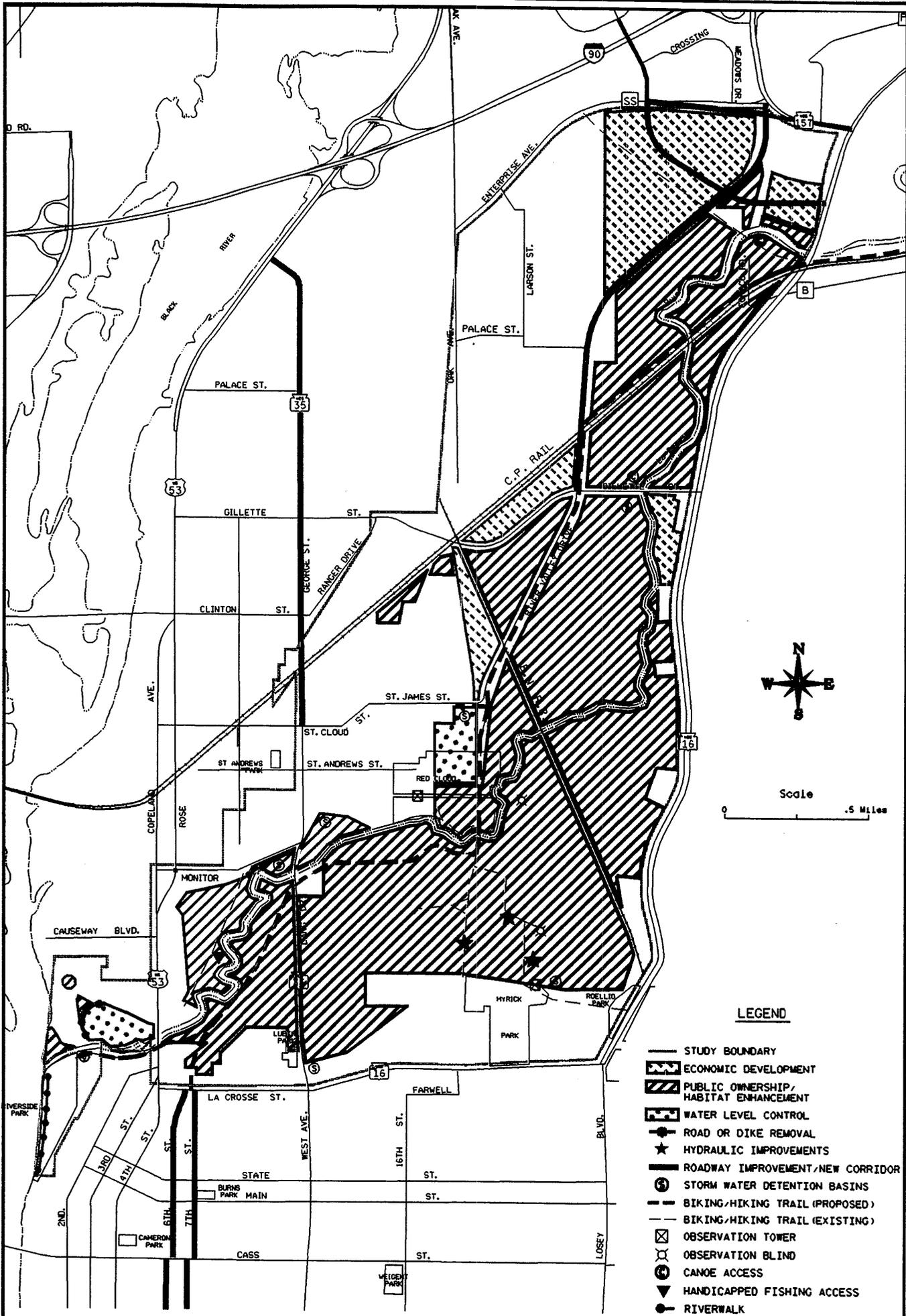
### ***City Vision 2000, Downtown Mainstreet Inc. (1992)***

The *City Vision 2000 Master Plan* was co-sponsored by the City of La Crosse and Downtown Mainstreet Inc. The principal focus of the plan is to provide a new "vision" for revitalizing downtown La Crosse as a major activity center for the City and the region. The following recommendations are relevant to this MIS/Draft EIS:

- Retain 3rd and 4th Streets as primary thoroughfares in the downtown area. These corridors carry traffic through the central business district and to all principal downtown destinations.
- Improve the regional bicycle system by promoting bicycle access into downtown areas and providing bicycle access to resources such as Hixon Forest, City parks, and State recreational trails.
- Develop additional travel corridors into downtown via 6th and 7th Streets in conjunction with the *La Crosse River Valley Study*.
- Construct a new multi-purpose transit transfer center to improve transit operations, and provide a new retail development facility.

### ***Wisconsin Industrial Business Expansion Study, La Crosse Area (1994)***

This study focuses on ways to retain existing businesses in the City of La Crosse rather than attracting new businesses as a means of economic development. The plan notes that the present street configuration and delay at numerous traffic signals are perceived as problems by existing downtown businesses. The study recognizes that truck service and employee transportation are vital to local businesses, and recommends working to improve north-south arterial roadways in the metro area.



# LA CROSSE RIVER VALLEY LAND USE PLAN

## LEGEND

- STUDY BOUNDARY
- ▨ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- ▨ PUBLIC OWNERSHIP/HABITAT ENHANCEMENT
- ▨ WATER LEVEL CONTROL
- ROAD OR DIKE REMOVAL
- ★ HYDRAULIC IMPROVEMENTS
- ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT/NEW CORRIDOR
- ⊙ STORM WATER DETENTION BASINS
- BIKING/HIKING TRAIL (PROPOSED)
- BIKING/HIKING TRAIL (EXISTING)
- ⊗ OBSERVATION TOWER
- ⊗ OBSERVATION BLIND
- ⊙ CANOE ACCESS
- ▼ HANDICAPPED FISHING ACCESS
- RIVERWALK



Scale  
0 .5 Miles