

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



## Collaborative + Community Based Planning

The Community's greatest assets for this Plan are the knowledge, interest, and contributions that its citizens, businesses, local officials, and advisory commissions made to the development of the Community's vision and next-generation plan. The planning process provided opportunities for community involvement in creative and practical ways to help shape the future of the Highway 53 Corridor. The major forces, issues, and opportunities associated with the Corridor have been defined through a series of interactive committee meetings, business owner interviews, community workshops, open houses, and interviews with developers. The results of the community exercises have been synthesized into goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs to assist in shaping the vision for the Corridor and guide the creation of this Master Plan.

The City of La Crosse engaged the community to create the Highway 53 Corridor Plan from the I-90 – Exit 3 interchange to the La Crosse River crossing, south of Causeway Boulevard.

A list of Frequently Asked Questions from community members during the course of the project can be found in Appendix B of this report, along with corresponding answers from the Highway 53 Project Team.



## Steering Committee

The City of La Crosse convened and engaged the Steering Committee throughout the planning process. The Committee made pivotal decisions and contributions to major project deliverables. The Steering Committee was composed of elected officials from the City of La Crosse, business/property owners, and neighborhood stakeholders.

### Kick-Off Meeting: September 7, 2016

The Steering Committee, participated in three facilitated strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) exercises for Highway 53 at a kick-off meeting on September 7, 2016. Individual comments were recorded and posted for other participants to view and comment.



### QUESTION #1

**What is unique about the Highway 53 corridor and what aspects of the Corridor should be enhanced and/or maintained?**

- River: waterfront access, eagle watch area
- Gateway/Entrance to La Crosse
- Development: improved housing, develop underutilized land, economic growth
- Traffic: enhance traffic flow, multi-modal improvements



### QUESTION #2

**What is problematic along the Corridor and needs improvement?**

- Run-down/underutilized properties and buildings: poor condition, absentee landlords,
- Floodplain
- Improved identity and image
- Multi-modal access and circulation



### QUESTION #3

What would substantial positive change (short term implementation or improvements) look like in five years along the Highway 53 Corridor?

- Beautify Corridor and gateway
- Redevelopment of underutilized properties
- New branded image and change public perception



### QUESTION #4

If a robust and realistic plan for the corridor was implemented, what would the Corridor look like in 20 years?

- Public and private sector growth: creating community strategic value
- Fully redeveloped corridor: new shops, housing, hotels and neighborhoods
- Improved River access and recreational amenities
- Sense of Northside pride



### QUESTION #5

What one thing would you change about the Highway 53 Corridor?

- Removal of undesirable buildings/land uses along the Corridor
- Redevelopment of key parcels: Bridgeview Square Image

## Focus Groups / Community Events

- November 2016**
  - 26th: Lights Over Northern La Crosse
  - 30th: City Departments - Engineering, Public Works, Water Utility, Streets
  - 30th: Floodplain - City, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, United States Army Corp of Engineers
- December 2016**
  - 1st: Transportation - City, Municipal Transit Utility, County, La Crosse Area Planning Committee, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
  - 2nd: Intergovernmental - City, County
  - 2nd: Parks, Recreation, Forestry
  - 21st: Lower Northside Depot Neighborhood
- January 2017**
  - 24th: Northside Logan Neighborhood

## Stakeholder Groups

- October 2016**
  - 4th-5th: Interviews with developers, Realtors, and contractors.
- November 2016**
  - 28th: Neighborhood Revitalization Commission
  - 30th: 3 Business stakeholder meetings
- December 2016**
  - 1st: 4 Business stakeholder meetings
  - 2nd: 1 Business stakeholder meeting
  - 5th: Explore La Crosse (La Crosse County Convention and Visitors Bureau)
  - 6th: Common Council Planning Session
  - 15th: Redevelopment Authority
  - 20th: Bike- Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- January 2017**
  - 13th: Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission

## Public Workshops

### First Public Workshop: Open House Overview: November 10, 2016

The first public workshop for the Highway 53 Corridor Plan was held November 10, 2016, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Northside Elementary School. The public workshop included a presentation on the overall purpose of the planning process and schedule, three stations that included interactive exercises that requested input related to corridor “identity”, and transportation and economic development. The participants in the workshop were asked to rotate through the three stations and provide responses to specific questions. Individual comments were recorded and posted for other participants to view and respond. The workshop was designed as a broad community conversation to gather feedback from residents, business owners, and others who use the corridor.

A summary of outcomes from the three topic break-outs follows:



### IDENTITY



### TRANSPORTATION



### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### Summary of Input:

- ✓ Enhance aesthetics, improved gateway experience and more welcoming
- ✓ Maintain function of roadway but get people to stop
- ✓ Enhance businesses
- ✓ See and recognize businesses, get people to stop
- ✓ Directions to/from corridor
- ✓ Define landmarks along the corridor with signs and wayfinding
- ✓ Enhance pedestrian and multi-modal access and circulation

- ✓ Provide safe crossings, enhance intersections, and consolidate driveways/curb cuts
- ✓ Redevelop new and/or opportunities
- ✓ Do not redevelop sites that support “good” businesses
- ✓ Define opportunities to provide housing choices and business that provide living wages
- ✓ Redevelop recommended needs to balance floodplain issues

## Second Public Workshop: February 23, 2017

The second public workshop for the Highway 53 Corridor Plan was held February 23, 2017, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Northside Elementary School. The public workshop included three stations that displayed information on corridor redevelopment concepts, corridor design recommendations related to parks/trails/circulation, and a “What we Heard” slide show to share public feedback to date. The workshop was designed to share recommendations for improving the safety, multi-modal access and circulation, crossing improvements, corridor aesthetics, and growing the tax base through redevelopment at key nodes. The workshop was also designed to gather feedback from residents, business owners, and others who use the corridor.

### REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

- ✓ Workshop participants shared their personal stories of living in the area and their experiences along the Highway 53 Corridor.
- ✓ Future redevelopment and roadway designs need to respect the historic resources and existing businesses along the corridor and accommodate the needs of the present and future community.

### TRANSPORTATION/ STREETSCAPE/PARKS

- ✓ Safely accommodate all modes, especially pedestrians, along the corridor and especially at busy intersections.
- ✓ Providing safe and adequate space for the most vulnerable user — the pedestrian —will also enhance the overall public realm.
- ✓ Address the effects of motor vehicle traffic, including traffic calming.
- ✓ Many participants commented on the impact of motor vehicles along the corridor. The motorized traffic is not going away, but there are opportunities to accommodate motorized traffic, yet make the corridor a more pleasant and safe experience for all who frequent the area.

### Third Public Workshop: May 16th, 2017

The third public workshop for the Highway 53 Corridor Plan was held May 16th, 2017, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Northside Elementary School. The public workshop included three stations that displayed information on corridor redevelopment concepts, corridor design recommendations, implementation strategies, and a “What we Heard” slide show to share public feedback to date. The workshop was designed to share recommendations for improving the safety, multi-modal access and circulation, crossing improvements, corridor aesthetics, and growing the tax base through redevelopment at key nodes. The workshop was also designed to gather feedback from residents, business owners, and others who use the corridor.

The project Steering Committee continually altered the process and corridor planning to address input received from all sources listed above. The recommended intersection improvements, enhanced pedestrian facilities, roadway improvements, and redevelopment scenarios all were significantly shaped by public and stakeholder input. The recommendations in this Plan were generally accepted by those engaged as the best options within the project’s constraints. Where participant desires could not be accommodated, the Steering Committee made its best effort to identify next-best options or mitigating measures.

