

VISION & GOALS FOR *COULEE VISION*

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the La Crosse, WI-MN urbanized area, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) is required to develop a transportation plan with a 20-year-or-more planning horizon that includes “both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods.”

At a minimum, the transportation planning process must consider projects and strategies that will:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

These federal goals, which are codified in the federal transportation bill, provide a framework from which to develop more focused and detailed goals and objectives at the local level.

As a result of the planning process for *Coulee Vision*, the LAPC has adopted a comprehensive vision as well as additional land use and transportation goals to help the policy-makers in the region guide development and transportation investment.

The Vision for *Coulee Vision* states that:

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“The region’s towns, villages, and cities each recognize the vital link between land use decisions and transportation outcomes, and will collaborate with each other over the coming decades to encourage infill development, limit urban sprawl, and increase mobility options for all users across the region.”

The land use and transportation goals and “guiding principles” recommended to be incorporated into local plans and policies are presented in **Table 1-1**.

TABLE 1-1: LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Land Use

Housing and neighborhoods in the City of La Crosse will attract new investment and more residents, especially through renovation and enhancement of existing housing stock.

Senior housing options will continue to expand, and new housing intended for residents who remain mobile and active should be located within a 10-minute walk of retail and services.

New housing will continue to include a range of housing types and lot sizes, including a priority on single family lots smaller than 1/2-acre.

The region places a high priority on infill development to enhance the utilization of existing urban infrastructure and enhance the concentration of uses so that more residents are within a 10-minute walk of their daily retail needs.

New buildings and development areas will often include a mix of uses.

Towns, villages and cities will pursue and approve boundary agreements that allow some growth in unincorporated areas.

Transportation

New roads for the primary purpose of facilitating regional commuter traffic will generally be avoided – community preference is for expansion of existing roads and transit enhancements instead.

Road projects will be designed to improve the safety and mobility of all users, with emphasis placed on maintaining neighborhood connections and cohesiveness.

The region will have a flexible and fully interconnected grid of streets and highways.

A Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) will be created to fund and maintain transportation systems.

Transit use will increase among all age groups.

Fixed-route regional transit, such as Bus Rapid Transit, should be actively studied and pursued. Routes should be identified and necessary right-of-way protected (or gradually acquired) until implementation becomes feasible.

Intelligent transportation systems and mass data gathering technologies will be utilized to the extent practicable to improve the safety and mobility of our transportation networks.



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TABLE 1-1: LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES (CONT.)

Transportation (continued)

Growth will be accommodated without a significant increase in congestion through the use of many strategies, including road and highway improvements, traffic signal timing improvements, new/enhanced transit services, enhanced and expanded bike and pedestrian facilities, scheduling adjustments by major employers, and other approaches.

Truck routes in the region will be efficient and clearly identified, especially including those through the City of La Crosse.

Mississippi River locks and dams will be upgraded to accommodate modern shipping requirements.

Interstate passenger rail service to Minneapolis and Milwaukee/Chicago will increase in frequency and reliability.

Public and private landowners will reduce their subsidy of automobile use through a mix of strategies.

Bike and pedestrian facilities will be present everywhere.

Full explanations of the goals and guiding principles can be found in the LAPC document, *Coulee Vision 2050: A Vision for the La Crosse - La Crescent Area*.

Additional objectives or *performance measures* that have been adopted by the LAPC through its coordination with the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation are discussed where appropriate in the *Coulee Vision* document. The LAPC currently produces a *Performance Measures Annual Progress Report Summary* that tracks performance measures for economic vitality, safety and security, accessibility and mobility, system preservation, integration and connectivity, management and operations, and environment and quality of life. Beginning in 2016, the LAPC will prepare and annually update a Performance Measures Report that serves as a supplement to the MTP and includes measures adopted by our Departments of Transportation (DOTs).

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The *Coulee Vision* plan document is organized into seven chapters:

Chapter 1: *Coulee Vision* Goals and Organization discusses the goals for the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) and the overall organization of the document.

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Chapter 2: Public Process summarizes the public process for *Coulee Vision*—the MTP for the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the La Crosse and La Crescent area.

Chapter 3: State of the Region provides an overview and analysis of common demographic characteristics for the LAPC planning area, including population, households, employment, and building construction characteristics.

Chapter 4: Existing Conditions provides an inventory of existing transportation networks in the planning area, including highway, bicycle and shared-use, pedestrian, passenger, freight, and transit.

Chapter 5: Environmental Review provides a comprehensive inventory of natural, cultural, and agricultural resources in the planning area and potential mitigation activities.

Chapter 6: Challenges, Strategies, and Action Steps presents the safety, mobility, and policy-based challenges of our transportation system; discusses the strategies used and recommended to address the challenges; and establishes a timeline for three key action steps.

Chapter 7: Financial Analysis compares reasonably expected state, federal and local transportation funding with the anticipated expenses needed to maintain the expansion, operations and maintenance of our area roadways and transit systems. The Financial Analysis helps the area prioritize future projects and expenditures in order to maintain a safe and efficient transportation network.