

**CHAPTER 31**

**LA CROSSE COUNTY, WISCONSIN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2007-2027**

- 31.01 Existing Conditions Report
- 31.02 Issues, Vision and Goals
- 31.03 Land Use Plan
- 31.04 La Crosse County Recommendations and Policies
- 31.05 La Crosse County Implementation Element
- 31.06 Farmland Preservation Plan

31.01 EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT.

(1) Introduction.

(a) Welcome to the Inventory and Analysis portion of the Comprehensive Plan. This volume contains the statistical profile and background analysis prepared in preparation of updating the County's Comprehensive Plan. Plan Recommendations will be developed and placed in a separate volume. This volume looks at both existing conditions and future projections. This has been done to provide a clear understanding of where the County is today, and perhaps more importantly, to foster discussion and debate on what direction the County and individual communities look to head in the future.

(b) Much of the data collection and mapping for this Inventory and Analysis Report was completed at the County level, with information provided at the sub-area level to determine trends and issues in specific locations throughout the County.

(c) This portion of the Plan has been prepared under the State of Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law, adopted in 1999 and contained in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. The Law requires that all land use decisions in the County be consistent with this Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the Plan is intended to be updated at least once every 10 years. The review will serve as a checkpoint to ensure that the document is providing clear direction and that it is still consistent with community goals, values, and needs.

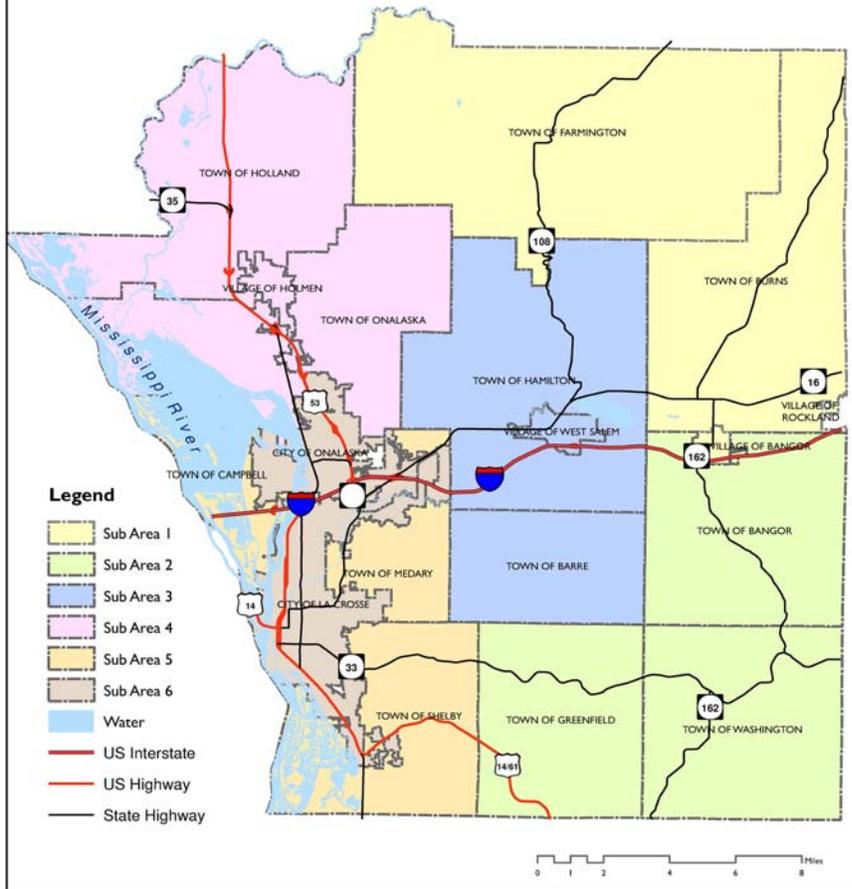
1. Volume Organization. This Volume is separated into Chapters.

Chapters include:

- a. Introduction
- b. Regional Context and Dynamics
- c. Demographic Trends and Projections
- d. Land Use
- e. Agricultural Resources
- f. Natural Resources
- g. Cultural Resources
- h. Housing
- i. Transportation
- j. Utilities and Community Facilities
- k. Economic Development
- l. Intergovernmental Cooperation

2. Sub Planning Areas. As a means to provide localized input on the County's planning process, six planning sub areas have been organized. Each sub area will provide guidance on the creation of the County Plan. The location of sub areas is located on the Sub Area Planning Groups Map. Each participating community is expected to create their own plan, to supplement the County's plan. The intent of this project is for local communities to help set a general set of recommendations and principles for the County. The individual community plans will provide additional details and standards per community desires. The County will update ordinances and plans to fully implement both the County and Local Plans.

## Sub-Area Planning Groups





Map 1.1

**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2006



Source: La Crosse County Plng. Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

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(2) Regional Context and Dynamics.

(a) One of the opportunities associated with the La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan is to look beyond municipal borders. Much of this report focuses on the relationship between individual communities and the County. It is also important, however, to look at the role of the County in the larger region. The following "Big Picture" analysis has been done to examine the regional dynamics that influence the County.

(b) The following regional opportunities should be considered:

1. County is the gateway to Wisconsin
2. County is the gateway to the Coulee Region / Mississippi River
3. Regional employment center
4. Location of prime and productive agricultural lands
5. Convergence of multiple bike networks
6. Tourist destination
7. Key destinations along the "Great River Road"
8. Regional transportation hub
9. Educational center
10. Educated population
11. Abundant natural resources and
12. State defining natural features and cultural features
13. Historic Urban Center
14. Home to desirable smaller communities and Towns.



(3) Demographic Trends and Projections.

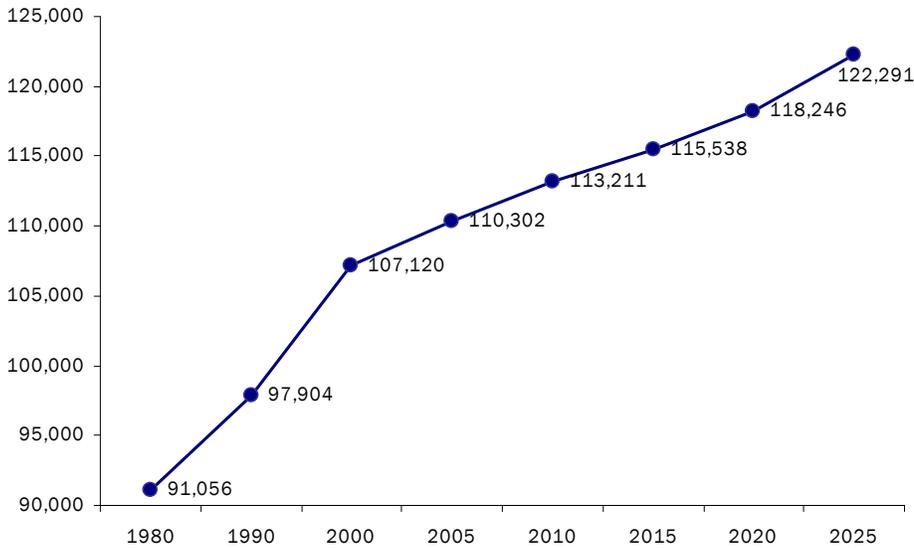
(a) Overview. The section of the existing conditions report provides information and analysis on current demographic trends. For the purpose of this report, demographic data is provided at the municipal, the sub-area, and the county, and state level.

(b) Population Trends and Forecasts.

1. La Crosse County's population has grown between 10 percent and 15 percent each of the past several decades. Certain parts of the county have large amounts of growth, including the Town of Holland, the Village of Holmen, and the Village of West Salem. These areas of the county are projected to grow throughout the next twenty (20) years. Other places in La Crosse County, including the Town of Shelby and the Town of Medary, are projected to see their declining populations stabilize over the next twenty (20) years.

2. Figure 3.1 demonstrates how rapidly the county is growing, while, Table 3.1 acknowledges that growth is not evening shared throughout the county.

3. Figure 3.1: La Crosse County Population Projections



Source: State of Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2005

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4. Table 3.1 outlines how and where the county has fluctuated during the past twenty (20) years and what may happen during the next twenty (20) years. Data for the past twenty (20) years comes from the U.S. Census Bureau. The projections for the next twenty years have been provided by the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). The DOA considers and monitors changes and patterns in fertility, mortality, and migration. Each is evaluated separately and then are incorporated into one final projection.

**Table 3.1: US Census Population Counts and Wisconsin DOA Projections for La Crosse County**

	Census			Projections				
	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Town of Burns	988	977	979	985	990	989	993	1,007
Town of Farmington	1,603	1,577	1,733	1,820	1,903	1,975	2,052	2,153
Village of Bangor	1,012	1,076	1,400	1,474	1,544	1,606	1,672	1,757
Village of Rockland	383	509	625	669	712	750	790	839
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>3,986</b>	<b>4,139</b>	<b>4,737</b>	<b>4,948</b>	<b>5,149</b>	<b>5,320</b>	<b>5,507</b>	<b>5,756</b>
Town of Bangor	572	598	583	592	599	603	610	623
Town of Greenfield	1,537	1,617	1,538	1,562	1,583	1,596	1,614	1,651
Town of Washington	611	598	738	772	804	831	861	901
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>2,720</b>	<b>2,813</b>	<b>2,859</b>	<b>2,926</b>	<b>2,986</b>	<b>3,030</b>	<b>3,085</b>	<b>3,175</b>
Town of Barre	901	909	1,014	1,063	1,108	1,148	1,191	1,248
Town of Hamilton	1,472	1,633	2,103	2,294	2,477	2,646	2,821	3,028
Village of West Salem	3,276	3,611	4,738	5,076	5,399	5,691	5,998	6,372
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>5,649</b>	<b>6,153</b>	<b>7,855</b>	<b>8,433</b>	<b>8,984</b>	<b>9,485</b>	<b>10,010</b>	<b>10,648</b>
Town of Holland	1,776	2,175	3,042	3,329	3,609	3,867	4,134	4,447
Town of Onalaska	5,386	5,803	5,210	5,445	5,668	5,860	6,071	6,349
Village of Holmen	2,411	3,236	6,200	6,931	7,633	8,287	8,958	9,729
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>9,573</b>	<b>11,214</b>	<b>14,452</b>	<b>15,705</b>	<b>16,910</b>	<b>18,014</b>	<b>19,163</b>	<b>20,525</b>
Town of Campbell	4,118	4,490	4,410	4,448	4,478	4,486	4,511	4,587
Town of Medary	1,794	1,539	1,463	1,493	1,519	1,538	1,562	1,604
Town of Shelby	5,620	5,002	4,687	4,676	4,655	4,613	4,589	4,617
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>11,532</b>	<b>11,031</b>	<b>10,560</b>	<b>10,617</b>	<b>10,652</b>	<b>10,637</b>	<b>10,662</b>	<b>10,808</b>
City of La Crosse	48,347	51,140	51,818	51,718	51,507	51,059	50,810	51,141
City of Onalaska	9,249	11,414	14,839	15,955	17,023	17,993	19,009	20,238
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>57,596</b>	<b>62,554</b>	<b>66,657</b>	<b>67,673</b>	<b>68,530</b>	<b>69,052</b>	<b>69,819</b>	<b>71,379</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>91,056</b>	<b>97,904</b>	<b>107,120</b>	<b>110,302</b>	<b>113,211</b>	<b>115,538</b>	<b>118,246</b>	<b>122,291</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

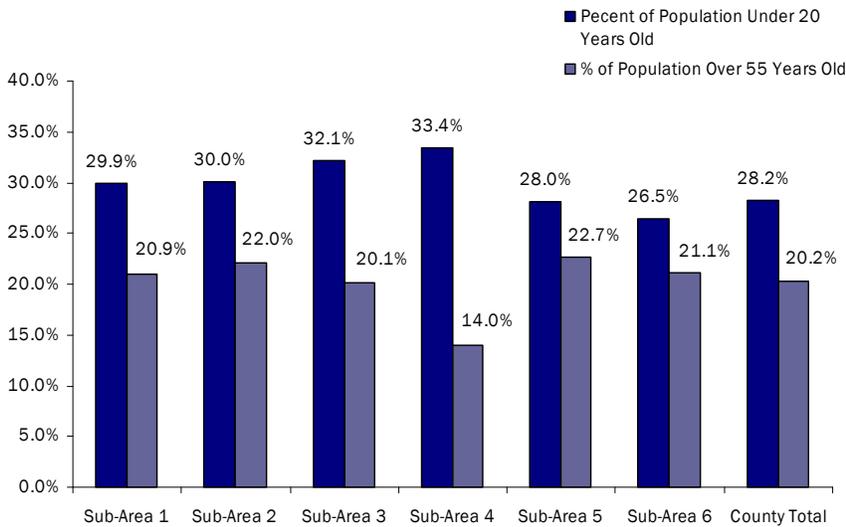
(c) Age and Gender.

1. The median age for the County is 33.5 years old, which is slightly lower than the state median age of 36 years old. Table 3.2 outlines the age distribution for the population of La Crosse County residents. The majority, 36.9 percent, of residents in La Crosse County are between 25 and 44 years old. However, the County has a large population of school age children, ages 5 to 19 years old. Figure 3.2 demonstrates the balance of the population throughout the County. 30 percent of the population is under age 20 and approximately 20 percent of the population is above 55 years old. The table shows that there are 22,884 school age children making up 22.3 percent of the population.

2. An exception can be found in the Towns of Holland, Onalaska, and the Village of Holmen, where a third of the population is less than 20 years old, and only 14 percent of the population is over 55 years of age. These numbers are important to note as more research is conducted concerning school demand and other family needs.

3. The City of La Crosse has a significantly larger population of 20-24 year olds; this segment of the population makes up almost 15 percent of the population of the City. This can be contributed to the populations connected to the University of Wisconsin and Viterbo College which enroll large amounts of students in that age range.

**Figure 3.2: La Crosse County, Percentage of the Population Under 20 and Over 55 Years Old, 2000**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(3)(c)3.

**Table 3.2: La Crosse County, Population by Age, 2000**

	Total Population	Under 5 years	5 to 19 years	20 to 24 years	25 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 74 years	75 years and over
Town of Burns	979	6	24.5	4.2	28.4	17.1	15.5	4.4
Town of Farmington	1,733	5.5	22.5	4.2	29.8	16.9	16.5	4.7
Village of Bangor	1,400	8.2	22.9	3.7	31.2	11	14.1	9.2
Village of Rockland	625	7.8	23.9	4.5	32.5	14.4	13.3	3.6
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>4,737</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>30.3%</b>	<b>14.9%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
Town of Bangor	583	6.7	22.3	4.8	29	16.5	15	5.8
Town of Greenfield	1,538	9	23	3.7	31.3	14.6	14.8	3.5
Town of Washington	738	5.1	21.5	3.7	26.4	12.3	14.8	16.1
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>2,859</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>29.6%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>
Town of Barre	1,014	7.8	27.7	3.8	30.9	13.5	13.7	2.6
Town of Hamilton	2,103	6.1	24.4	3.4	27.5	15.6	17.3	5.7
Village of West Salem	4,738	8.9	23.3	4.1	31.9	12.2	12.3	7.2
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>7,855</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>24.2%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>30.5%</b>	<b>13.4%</b>	<b>13.9%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>
Town of Holland	3,042	6.8	27	3.8	32.3	16.7	11.3	1.9
Town of Onalaska	5,210	7.4	25.4	3.9	31.6	17.8	12.1	1.9
Village of Holmen	6,200	8.6	25.1	6.1	33.6	12.3	10.9	3.4
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>14,452</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>32.6%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
Town of Campbell	4,410	5.4	21.2	5.6	27.3	18.2	18.1	4.2
Town of Medary	1,463	6.4	23.9	4.6	27.3	19.3	15.3	3.2
Town of Shelby	4,687	5	23.7	3	23.5	20.3	20	4.4
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>10,560</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
City of La Crosse	51,818	4.8	21.1	17.3	25	10.3	13.3	8.3
City of Onalaska	14,839	6.8	21.8	6.4	29.9	15.5	14.6	5
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>66,657</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>14.9%</b>	<b>26.0%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>13.5%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>107,120</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>21.3%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>26.2%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

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(d) Race. The vast majority, or 94 percent, of residents of La Crosse County are white, however, there are many different races represented throughout the County. Residents of Asian descent comprise the 3.2 percent of the county population making them the second largest race population in the county. Almost 1 percent of the residents within La Crosse County are Latino.

**Table 3.3: La Crosse County, Percentage of Population by Race, 2000**

	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some other race	Two or more races
Town of Burns	98.4	0	0.1	0.9	0	0	0.6
Town of Farmington	97.5	0.3	0.3	0.8	0	0.5	0.6
Village of Bangor	98.2	0.3	0.8	0.3	0	0.1	0.4
Village of Rockland	98.4	0.2	0.2	0.5	0	0	0.8
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>98.0%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
Town of Bangor	99.1	0	0.2	0	0	0	0.7
Town of Greenfield	98.5	0.1	0	0.6	0	0.4	0.5
Town of Washington	98.1	0	0.4	0.8	0	0	0.7
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>98.5%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
Town of Barre	98.7	0.4	0	0.6	0	0.1	0.2
Town of Hamilton	98	0.3	0.4	0.8	0	0	0.6
Village of West Salem	98	0.5	0.4	0.4	0	0.1	0.5
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>98.1%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
Town of Holland	96.7	0.1	0.2	2	0	0.1	0.9
Town of Onalaska	97	0.2	0.6	1.3	0	0.1	0.7
Village of Holmen	95.3	0.3	0.3	3.2	0	0.3	0.6
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>96.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
Town of Campbell	96.5	0.5	0.5	1.1	0	0.3	1.1
Town of Medary	98.3	0.1	0	0.5	0	0.1	1
Town of Shelby	96.9	0.3	0.3	1.7	0	0.1	0.7
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>96.9%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
City of La Crosse	91.6	1.6	0.5	4.7	0	0.4	1.3
City of Onalaska	95.2	0.6	0.2	2.8	0	0.2	1
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>92.4%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>94.2%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(3)(e)

(e) Income Levels.

1. Table 3.5 demonstrates the median income generated by individual people, families, and households by municipalities, sub-areas, and the County. It is possible to see that the median income at the county level is slightly lower than the state income in all categories.

2. Three income means are considered:

a. Median Household Income is the average income for a household, which includes all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence.

b. Median Family Income is the average income of a group of two or more people who reside together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

c. Per Capita Income is an average obtained by dividing aggregate income by total population of an area.

d. Note that the median divides the total frequency distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases fall below the median and one-half of the cases exceed the median.

**Table 3.5: La Crosse County, Median Household Income, Median Family Income, and Per Capita Income, 2000**

	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	Per Capita Income
Town of Burns	\$41,620	\$44,375	\$16,947
Town of Farmington	\$41,477	\$46,500	\$18,096
Village of Bangor	\$42,102	\$46,058	\$17,648
Village of Rockland	\$46,071	\$51,071	\$17,933
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>\$41,861</b>	<b>\$46,279</b>	<b>\$17,791</b>
Town of Bangor	\$44,219	\$47,500	\$17,800
Town of Greenfield	\$49,653	\$52,625	\$20,501
Town of Washington	\$42,143	\$49,375	\$16,424
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>\$44,219</b>	<b>\$49,375</b>	<b>\$17,800</b>
Town of Barre	\$49,474	\$53,250	\$21,609
Town of Hamilton	\$57,955	\$59,792	\$20,142
Village of West Salem	\$43,449	\$50,176	\$19,904
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>\$49,474</b>	<b>\$53,250</b>	<b>\$20,142</b>
Town of Holland	\$55,846	\$57,383	\$20,126
Town of Onalaska	\$54,075	\$57,268	\$19,887
Village of Holmen	\$42,021	\$49,375	\$17,002
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>\$54,075</b>	<b>\$57,268</b>	<b>\$19,887</b>
Town of Campbell	\$44,736	\$55,439	\$20,741
Town of Medary	\$57,431	\$65,469	\$25,395
Town of Shelby	\$64,890	\$76,559	\$32,899
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>\$57,431</b>	<b>\$65,469</b>	<b>\$25,395</b>
City of La Crosse	\$31,103	\$43,047	\$17,650
City of Onalaska	\$47,800	\$57,264	\$24,066
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>\$39,452</b>	<b>\$50,156</b>	<b>\$20,858</b>
<b>County</b>	<b>\$39,472</b>	<b>\$50,380</b>	<b>\$19,800</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>\$43,791</b>	<b>\$52,911</b>	<b>\$21,271</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

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3. Poverty in La Crosse County directly relates to the economic base of the County. High rates of poverty can be a signal for a depressed economy. As outlined in the table below, 5 percent of families, and 10 percent of individuals in the County live below the poverty line. In the Town of Burns and the City of La Crosse, 6.8 percent and 7.8 percent of families respectively are living in poverty. Individual rates of poverty are higher than those of families. The Town of Burns and the City of La Crosse have 8.7 percent and 17.2 percent respectively, of individuals living in poverty.

**Table 3.6: La Crosse County, Poverty Level by Percentage of Total Population, 2000**

	Families			Individuals					
	Percent of Families below poverty level	With related children under 18 years	With related children under 5 years	Individuals Below Poverty Level	18 years and over	65 years and over	Related children under 18 years	Related children 5 to 17 years	Unrelated individuals 15 years and over
Town of Burns	6.2%	6.1%	4.9%	6.3%	5.8%	11.1%	5.6%	4.6%	17.2%
Town of Farmington	5.3%	3.5%	9.1%	6.9%	7.8%	12.0%	3.8%	2.9%	22.9%
Village of Bangor	4.7%	8.5%	8.9%	6.3%	5.6%	11.7%	7.4%	6.4%	20.0%
Village of Rockland	6.8%	12.0%	15.2%	8.7%	5.4%	0.0%	15.6%	14.7%	6.6%
Town of Bangor	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	3.9%	5.6%	16.9%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%
Town of Greenfield	4.1%	7.8%	11.2%	4.6%	3.4%	0.0%	7.3%	6.8%	11.3%
Town of Washington	5.8%	11.4%	17.2%	8.7%	5.9%	2.6%	16.0%	16.5%	11.4%
Town of Barre	2.0%	3.4%	7.2%	2.9%	2.4%	0.0%	3.8%	1.2%	11.3%
Town of Hamilton	1.4%	0.9%	0.0%	2.1%	2.5%	5.7%	1.4%	1.9%	19.6%
Village of West Salem	3.3%	5.6%	9.0%	3.5%	3.2%	3.4%	4.0%	2.4%	8.0%
Town of Holland	3.6%	6.7%	9.4%	4.2%	2.3%	2.2%	6.9%	6.9%	9.9%
Town of Onalaska	2.7%	1.8%	0.0%	3.8%	4.9%	6.4%	1.0%	1.4%	23.6%
Village of Holmen	5.7%	7.1%	13.7%	7.8%	6.1%	12.5%	11.6%	10.0%	11.5%
Town of Campbell	4.6%	9.6%	12.0%	5.1%	4.1%	1.5%	8.0%	7.8%	9.0%
Town of Medary	1.0%	2.0%	1.7%	3.6%	3.3%	0.0%	4.1%	4.8%	15.8%
Town of Shelby	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	1.4%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	11.7%
City of La Crosse	7.8%	13.1%	17.9%	17.2%	17.8%	9.0%	14.5%	13.7%	32.8%
City of Onalaska	4.5%	7.0%	12.0%	6.2%	5.5%	5.4%	7.7%	6.5%	13.6%
<b>County Total</b>	5.3%	8.4%	12.6%	10.7%	11.0%	7.5%	9.3%	8.5%	27.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

4. Sources. U.S. Bureau of the Census and State of Wisconsin Department of Administration.

(4) Land Use.

(a) Overview.

1. Land Use is among the most important planning considerations. The following chapter explores the relationship between existing uses, land use regulations, and projections for future use.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(4)(a)2.

2. La Crosse County is made up of over 300,000 acres. While nearly 70 percent of the County remains in agriculture or natural cover, the County is home to a regional center and metropolitan area. It is therefore not surprising that the County includes some of the fastest growing communities in the state. A benefit of the County planning effort is to provide a context to consider local growth decisions in conjunction with neighboring communities.

3. Over 40,000 housing units are found throughout the County's communities. As a whole, La Crosse County has a density of nearly 100 homes per square mile. The County's urban communities have a density of nearly 700 homes per square mile. Some of the County's more rural Towns, including Washington, Burns, and Bangor have less than 10 homes per square mile.

4. Land Use in the County is regulated by several ordinances, including the County's Zoning ordinance. The ordinance sets both the densities and non-residential intensities and is administered by County Planning and Zoning staff. The Comprehensive Plan will provide guidance regarding changes to zoning and other regulating ordinances.

5. This chapter also outlines future Land Use trends. In terms of demand, the County should generally plan to accommodate 5,000 additional acres of residential, commercial, and industrial land over the next 20 years. This figure, based on State population and housing forecasts, is more conservative than the growth rate experienced in the 1990s. A generalized look at land supply shows that there are nearly 190,000 acres that are physically suited for development. However, local and County policies have the opportunity to guide the future rate, form, and location of new growth.

(b) Existing Land Use Patterns. There are over 300,000 acres of land in La Crosse County. The following table and maps describe and depict these patterns. County wide, agriculture and forest lands make up for 67 percent of the County's land area. Residential lands make up approximately 7 percent of the County's acreage. A detailed set of existing land use acreages has also been prepared by the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse. These estimates were created through a different methodology and provide additional detail than those done by the Regional Planning Commission.

1. Opportunities for Redevelopment. There are a number of redevelopment opportunities available on a countywide level. The following projects were listed for La Crosse County in the 2007 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) developed by the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission.

Barron Isle (2007-2010)	a. C. La Crosse: Redevelop Former Holiday Inn Property on
	b. C. La Crosse: Gateway Redevelopment Project (2007-2009)
	c. C. La Crosse: Riverside Redevelopment Project (2007-2011)
Tourism Center (2013)	d. C. Onalaska: C. Onalaska Waterfront Redevelopment and
(schedule TBD)	e. C. Onalaska: Crossing Meadows Redevelopment Site

2. Existing/Potential Land Use Conflicts. There are no known existing land use conflicts where La Crosse County has purview over the mitigation of conflict. Potentially, annexation by incorporated communities will have an impact on town land use in some areas. La Crosse County is currently working with several communities to develop boundary agreements to forecast annexations and prevent conflicts. The County continues to provide assistance on land use issues where appropriate.

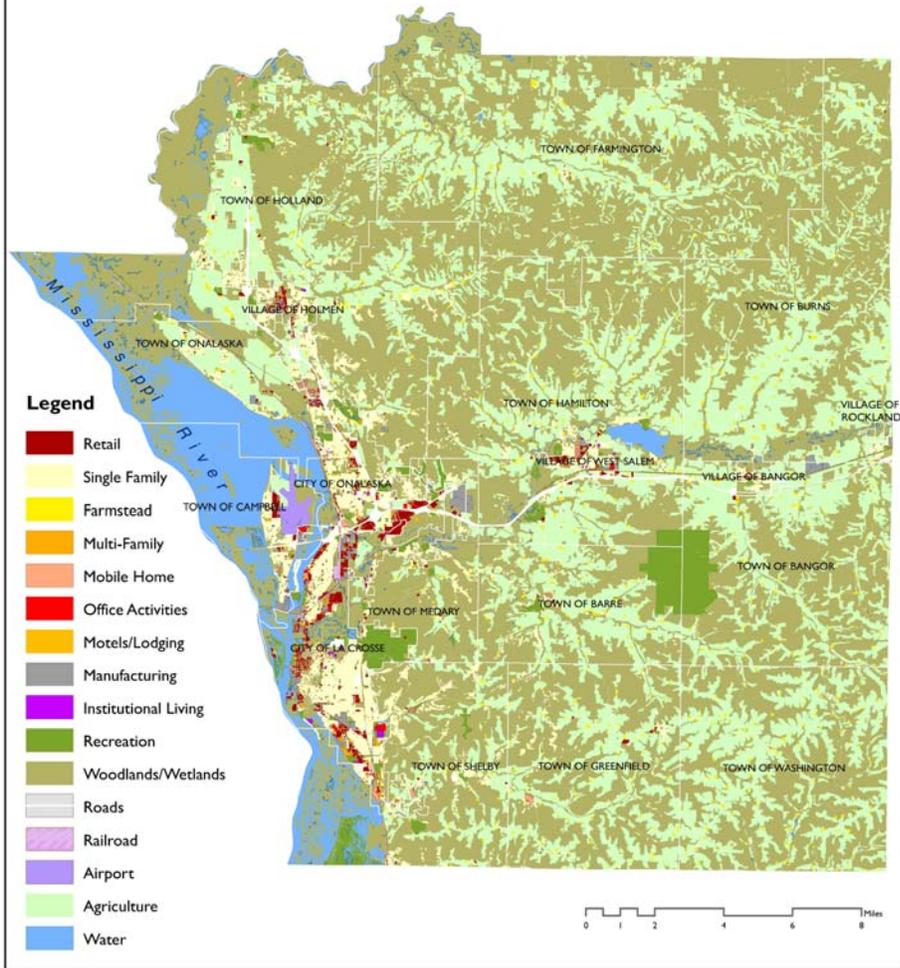
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(4)(b)2.

**Table 4.1: Existing Land Use Table**

	Residential	Commercial	Manufacturing	Agricultural	Swamp and Waste	Forest	Total
LA CROSSE (C)	3,769	2,968	508	93	173	6	14,000
ONALASKA (C)	1,610	939	46	545	338	346	5,994
BANGOR (T)	459	17	146	10,035	292	7,812	22,429
BARRE (T)	544	141	0	6,756	53	3,545	13,211
BURNS (T)	511	39	23	16,267	780	11,453	31,070
CAMPBELL (T)	803	131	11	0	39	0	8,071
FARMINGTON (T)	680	23	117	24,028	1,439	18,712	48,584
GREENFIELD (T)	776	101	72	7,815	161	8,468	19,282
HAMILTON (T)	1,198	340	158	15,023	349	10,698	32,729
HOLLAND (T)	1,398	273	627	6,727	1,734	7,642	29,064
MEDARY (T)	716	184	373	1,540	992	2,494	7,492
ONALASKA (T)	2,138	182	108	9,542	305	6,149	28,975
SHELBY (T)	4,031	219	7	3,667	272	4,391	18,815
WASHINGTON (T)	297	20	0	12,877	214	8,002	23,141
BANGOR (T)	125	31	3	127	155	0	667
HOLMEN (V)	706	278	50	176	3	25	1,941
ROCKLAND (V)	111	4	36	55	0	0	357
WEST SALEM (V)	361	229	61	11	9	0	1,452
<b>La Crosse County</b>	<b>20,233</b>	<b>6,119</b>	<b>2,346</b>	<b>115,284</b>	<b>7,308</b>	<b>89,743</b>	<b>307,274</b>

Source: Mississippi River Planning Commission, 2000

## Detailed Land Use Classification





Map 4.1

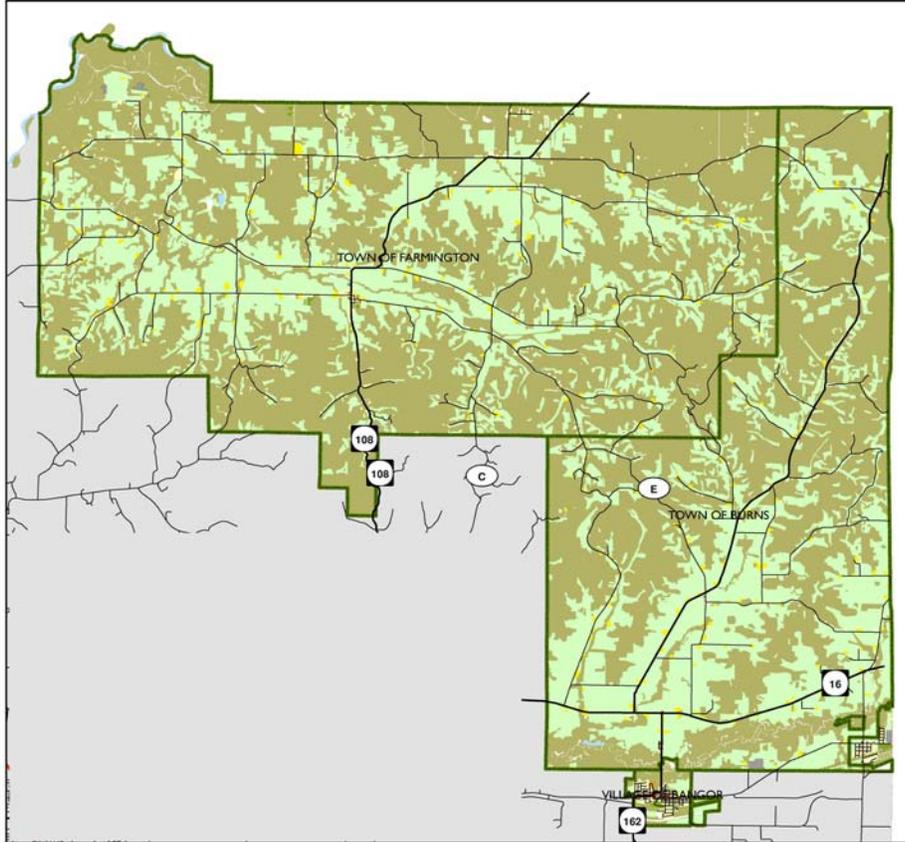
**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2006



Source: La Crosse County Plng. Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

## Sub Area Group I Land Use



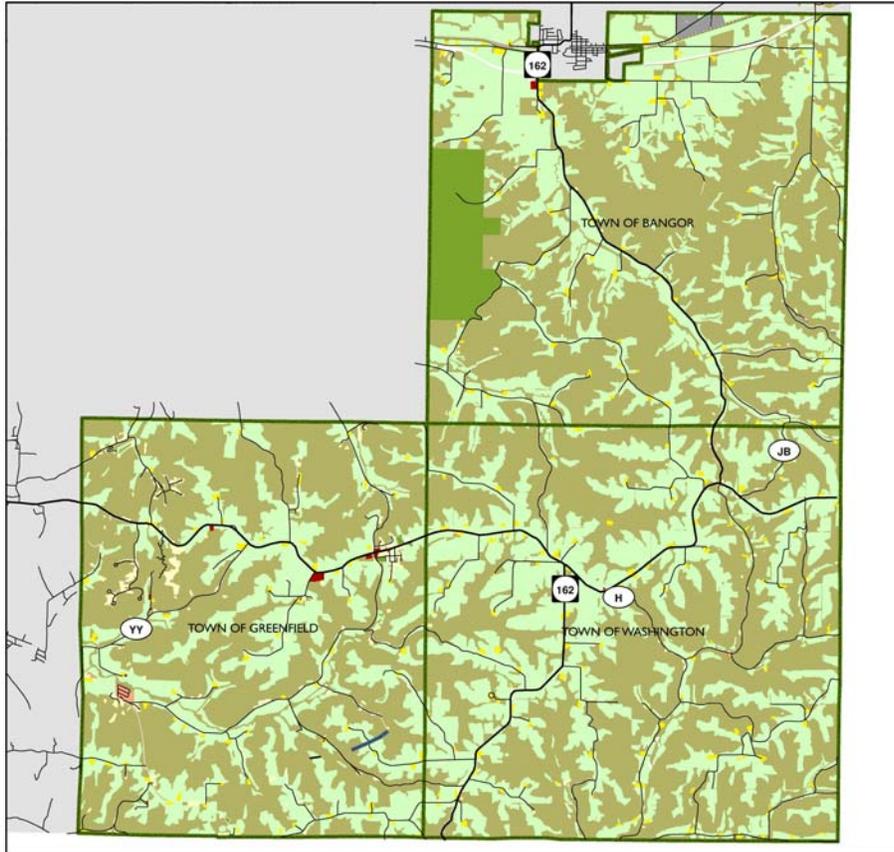
### Legend

Retail	Office Activities	Woodlands/Wetlands
Single Family	Motels/Lodging	Railroad
Farmstead	Manufacturing	Airport
Multi-Family	Institutional Living	Agriculture
Mobile Home	Recreation	Water



	<p>Map 4.2</p> <p><b>La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan</b></p> <p>January 2006</p>	<p>Source: La Crosse County Prog. Dept. Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap</p>
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## Sub Area Group 2 Land Use



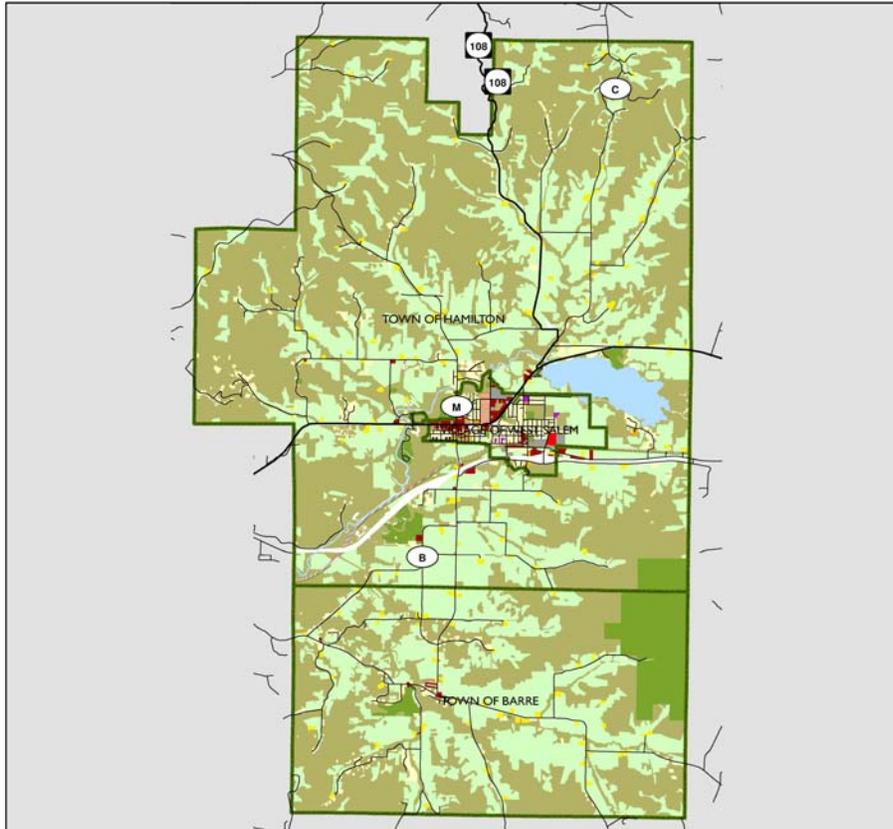
### Legend

	Retail		Office Activities		Woodlands/Wetlands
	Single Family		Motels/Lodging		Railroad
	Farmstead		Manufacturing		Airport
	Multi-Family		Institutional Living		Agriculture
	Mobile Home		Recreation		Water



	<p>Map 4.3</p> <p><b>La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan</b></p> <p>January 2006</p>	 <p>Source: La Crosse County Planning Dept. Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap</p>
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### Sub Area Group 3 Land Use



**Legend**

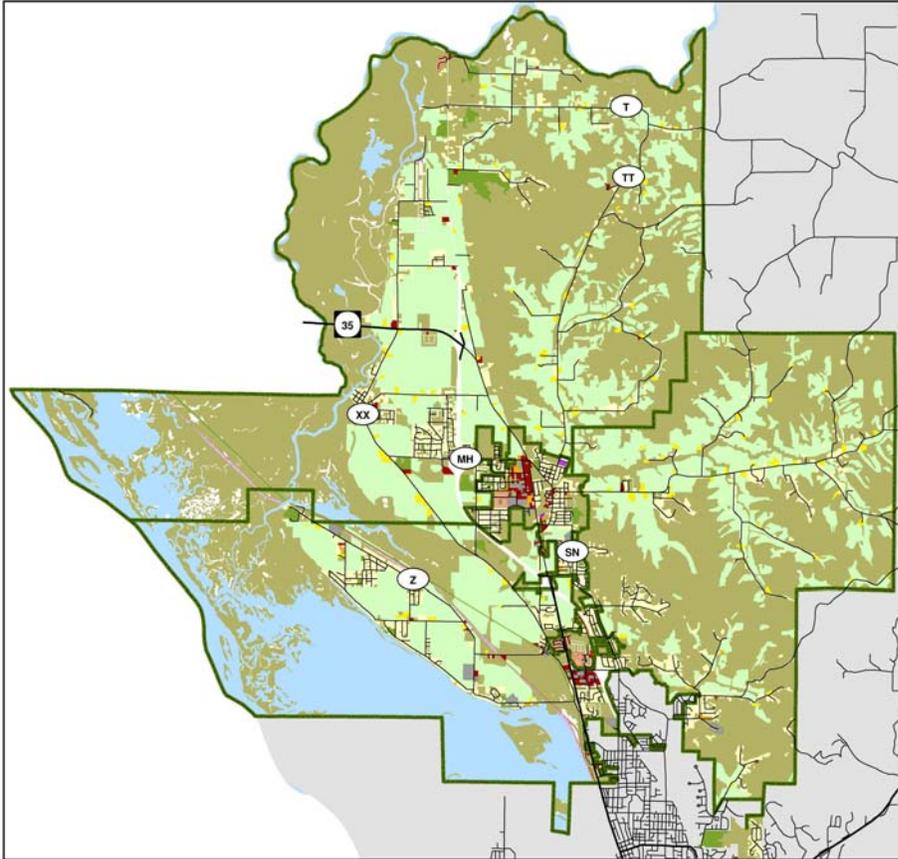
- |               |                      |                    |
|---------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Retail        | Office Activities    | Woodlands/Wetlands |
| Single Family | Motels/Lodging       | Railroad           |
| Farmstead     | Manufacturing        | Airport            |
| Multi-Family  | Institutional Living | Agriculture        |
| Mobile Home   | Recreation           | Water              |



	<p>Map 4.4</p>		
	<p><b>La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan</b></p>		

Source: La Crosse County Planning Dept. Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap.

## Sub Area Group 4 Land Use



### Legend

Retail	Office Activities	Woodlands/Wetlands
Single Family	Motels/Lodging	Railroad
Farmstead	Manufacturing	Airport
Multi-Family	Institutional Living	Agriculture
Mobile Home	Recreation	Water



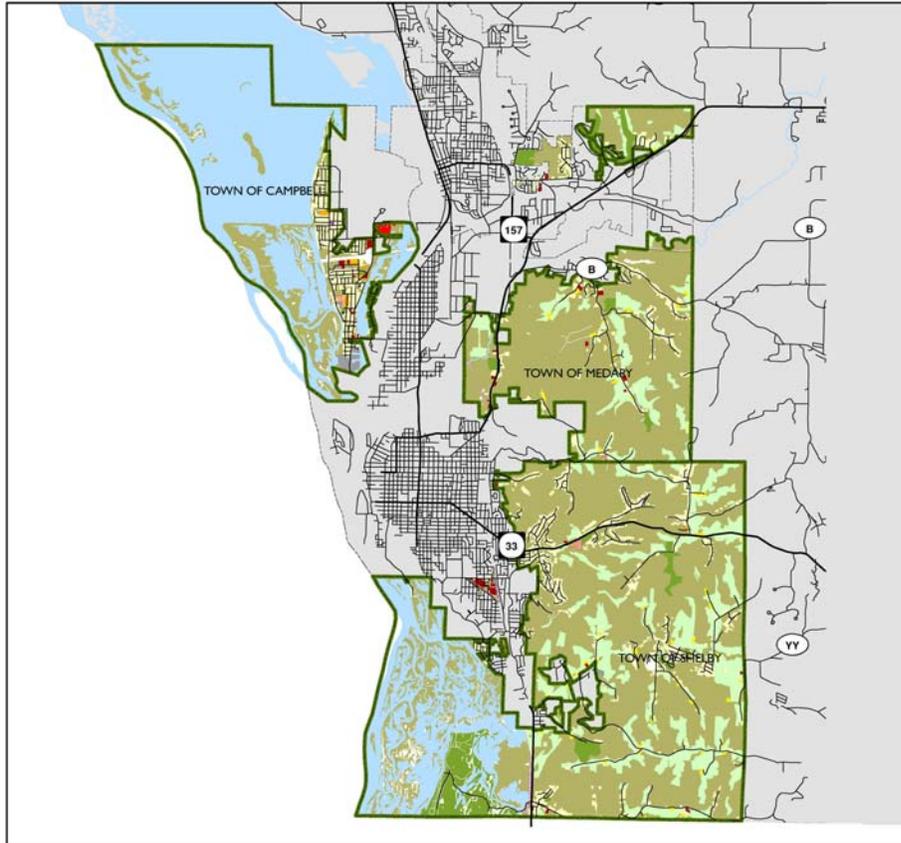
Map 4.5

**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2006

Source: La Crosse County Plng. Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap.

## Sub Area Group 5 Land Use



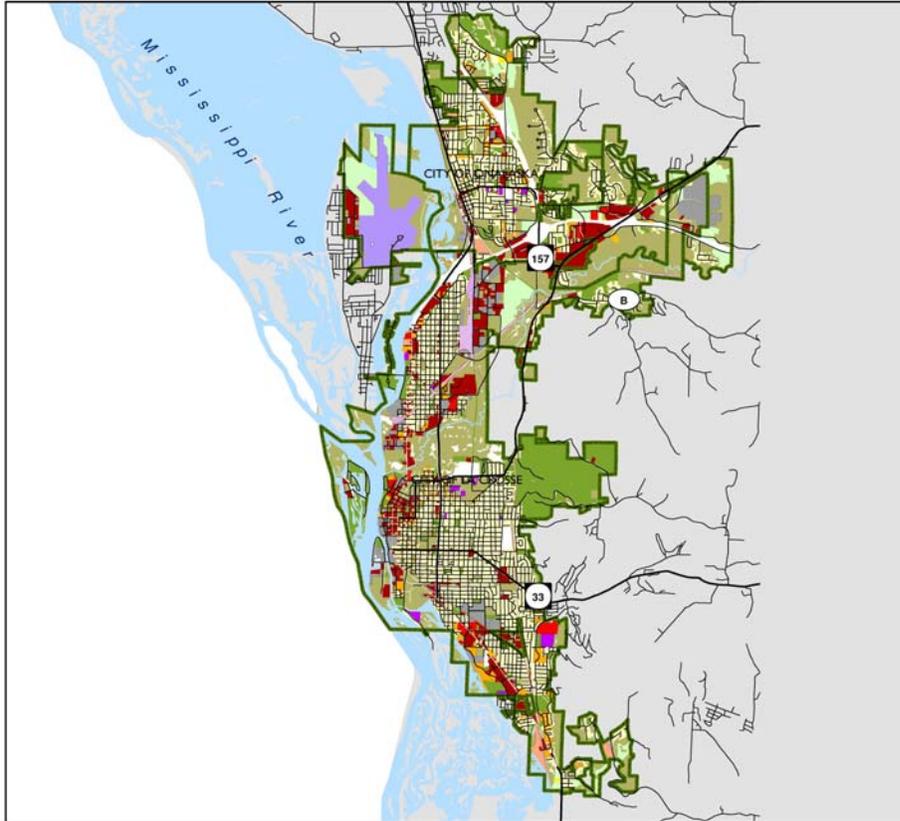
### Legend

Retail	Office Activities	Woodlands/Wetlands
Single Family	Motels/Lodging	Railroad
Farmstead	Manufacturing	Airport
Multi-Family	Institutional Living	Agriculture
Mobile Home	Recreation	Water



	<p>Map 4.6</p> <p><b>La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan</b></p> <p>January 2006</p>	<p>Source: La Crosse County Planning Dept. Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap</p>
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## Sub Area Group 6 Land Use



### Legend

Retail	Office Activities	Woodlands/Wetlands
Single Family	Motels/Lodging	Railroad
Farmstead	Manufacturing	Airport
Multi-Family	Institutional Living	Agriculture
Mobile Home	Recreation	Water





Map 4.7

**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2006



Source: La Crosse County Plan, Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(4)(c)

(c) Existing Densities. La Crosse County has an overall density of 237 people and 96 homes per square mile. The County's municipalities (La Crosse, Onalaska, Holmen, West Salem, Bangor, and Rockland) have an average density of 1,757 people and 696 homes per square mile. The density of La Crosse County's towns varies greatly due to their varied rural and suburban characters. The Towns of Washington, Burns, and Bangor exhibit the overall lowest density.

**Table 4.2: Population and Household Density**

	Population	Housing Units	Area in Square Miles			Density (Sq. Mi of Land Area)	
			Total Area	Water Area	Land Area	Population	Housing Units
La Crosse County	107,120	43,479	479.92	27.18	452.74	236.6	96
Bangor village	1,400	546	1.06	0	1.06	1,315.40	513
Bangor town	583	227	35.03	0	35.03	16.6	6.5
Barre town	1,014	354	20.67	0	20.67	49.1	17.1
Burns town	979	367	48.36	0.02	48.33	20.3	7.6
Burns town	979	367	48.36	0.02	48.33	20.3	7.6
Campbell town	4,410	1,823	12.57	8.73	3.84	1,148.00	474.5
Farmington town	1,733	706	75.58	0.17	75.41	23	9.4
Greenfield town	1,538	570	30.08	0	30.08	51.1	18.9
Hamilton town	2,301	732	51.11	1.04	50.07	46	14.6
Holland town	3,042	1,054	45.64	3.13	42.51	71.6	24.8
Holmen village	6,200	2,377	3.19	0	3.19	1,944.90	745.7
La Crosse city	51,818	22,233	22.16	2.02	20.14	2,573.40	1,104.10
Medary town	1,463	553	11.73	0.02	11.71	124.9	47.2
Onalaska city	14,839	6,070	9.68	0.58	9.09	1,631.60	667.4
Onalaska town	5,210	1,834	44.9	7.9	37	140.8	49.6
Rockland village	625	215	0.54	0	0.54	1,163.80	400.4
Shelby town	4,687	1,817	29.13	3.55	25.58	183.2	71
Washington town	738	236	36.1	0	36.1	20.4	6.5
West Salem village	4,540	1,765	2.39	0.01	2.38	1,911.20	743

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(4)(d)

(d) Non-Residential Intensities. The La Crosse County zoning ordinance regulates the intensity of nonresidential development outside of the municipalities with their own zoning. The following zoning districts are located throughout the County as shown on the following maps.

1. Commercial A (CA). This is the most restrictive district of non-agriculture/non-residential zoning districts in the County. A wide range of uses are allowed by right including small retail stores, gas stations, restaurants, grocery and motels. A maximum height limit of three stories or 45 feet is allowed.

2. Commercial B (CB). This is the second most restrictive district of the three non-agriculture / non-residential zoning districts in the County. A wide range of uses are allowed by right including feed mills, hotels, newsstands, and animal hospitals. A maximum height limit of three stories or 45 feet is allowed.

3. Commercial C (CC). This zoning district permits uses allowed in the Commercial B and more intensive uses including:

- a. Wholesale warehouses, truck terminals, and freight houses
- b. Storage plants (not including junk yards)
- c. Bakeries, printing plants, laboratories
- d. Woodworking and sheet metal fabrication plants

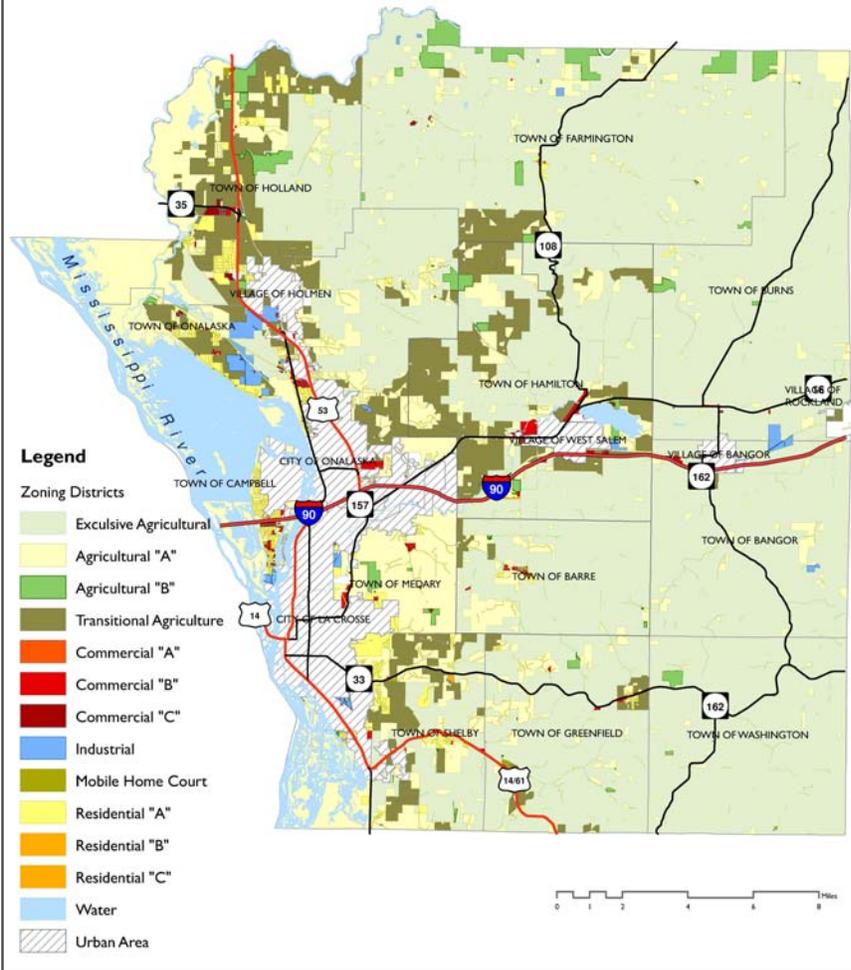
The maximum height allowed is three stories or 45 feet.

4. Industrial (I). The industrial district allows a wide variety of industrial, warehousing, commercial and related uses. However, residential, educational, and institutional uses are generally prohibited. In addition, the ordinance specifically states that the following uses are allowable only after investigation and public hearing:

- a. Abattoirs (except slaughter of poultry)
- b. Acid manufacture
- c. Cement, lime, manufacture
- d. Distillation of bones
- e. Explosives manufacture or storage
- f. Fat Rendering
- g. Fertilizer manufacturing
- h. Garbage, rubbish, other dumping
- i. Glue manufacturing
- j. Junk yard
- k. Petroleum refining
- l. Smelting
- m. Stockyards

The maximum height for this district is 60' or 5 stories.

## Existing County Zoning



Map 4.8

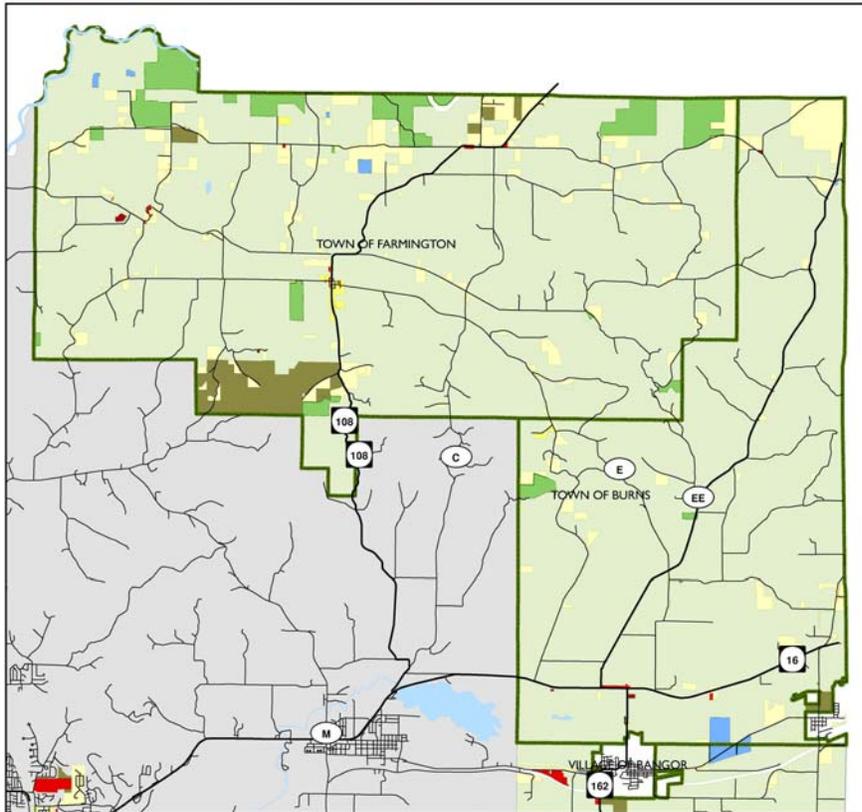
La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan

January 2006



Source: La Crosse County Prop. Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

## Sub Area Group I Zoning



### Legend

Zoning Districts			
	Exclusive Agricultural		Residential "A"
	Agricultural "A"		Residential "B"
	Agricultural "B"		Commercial "C"
	Transitional Agriculture		Industrial
	Mobile Home Court		Water



Map 4.9

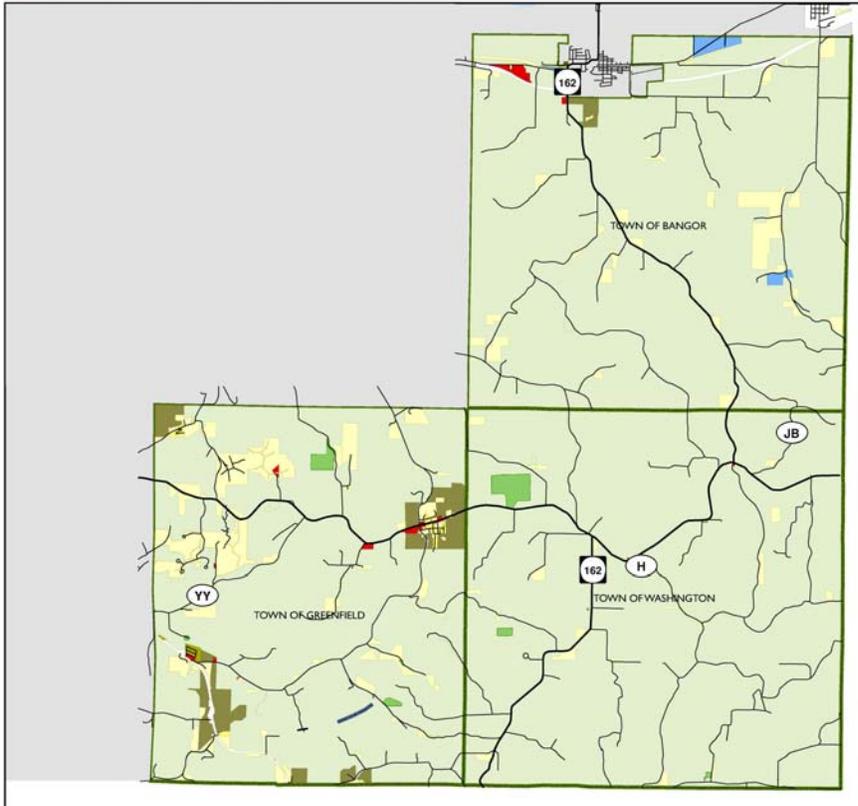
**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2006



Source: La Crosse County Plng. Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

## Sub Area Group 2 Zoning



### Legend

Zoning Districts			
	Exclusive Agricultural		Residential "A"
	Agricultural "A"		Residential "B"
	Agricultural "B"		Residential "C"
	Transitional Agriculture		Industrial
	Mobile Home Court		Water
	Commercial "A"		
	Commercial "B"		
	Commercial "C"		

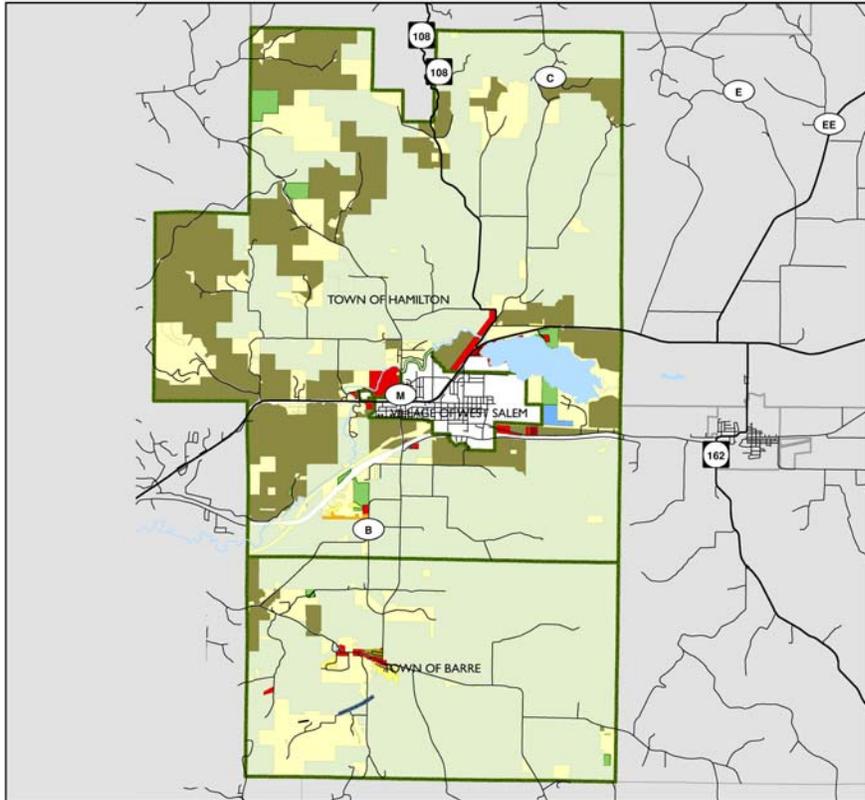
Map 4-10

**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2006

Source: La Crosse County Plng. Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

## Sub Area Group 3 Zoning



0 4.6 9.2 18.4 36.8 73.6 Miles

### Legend

#### Zoning Districts

	Exclusive Agricultural		Commercial "A"		Residential "A"
	Agricultural "A"		Commercial "B"		Residential "B"
	Agricultural "B"		Commercial "C"		Residential "C"
	Transitional Agriculture		Industrial		Water
	Mobile Home Court				



Map 4.11

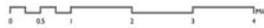
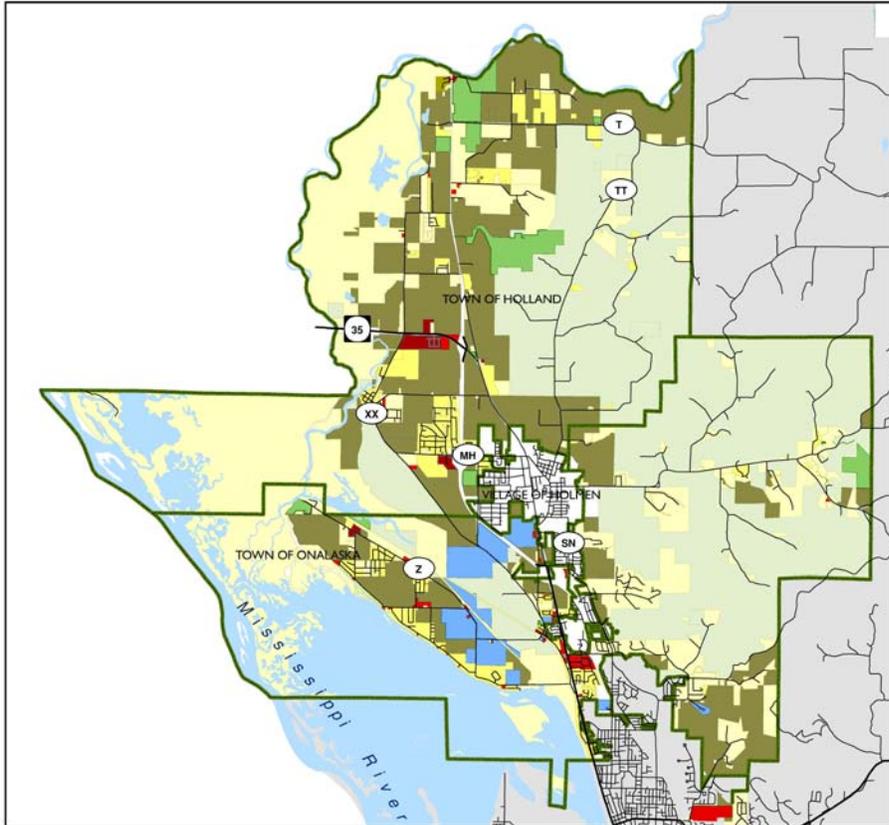
La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan

January 2006



Source: La Crosse County Planning Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

## Sub Area Group 4 Zoning

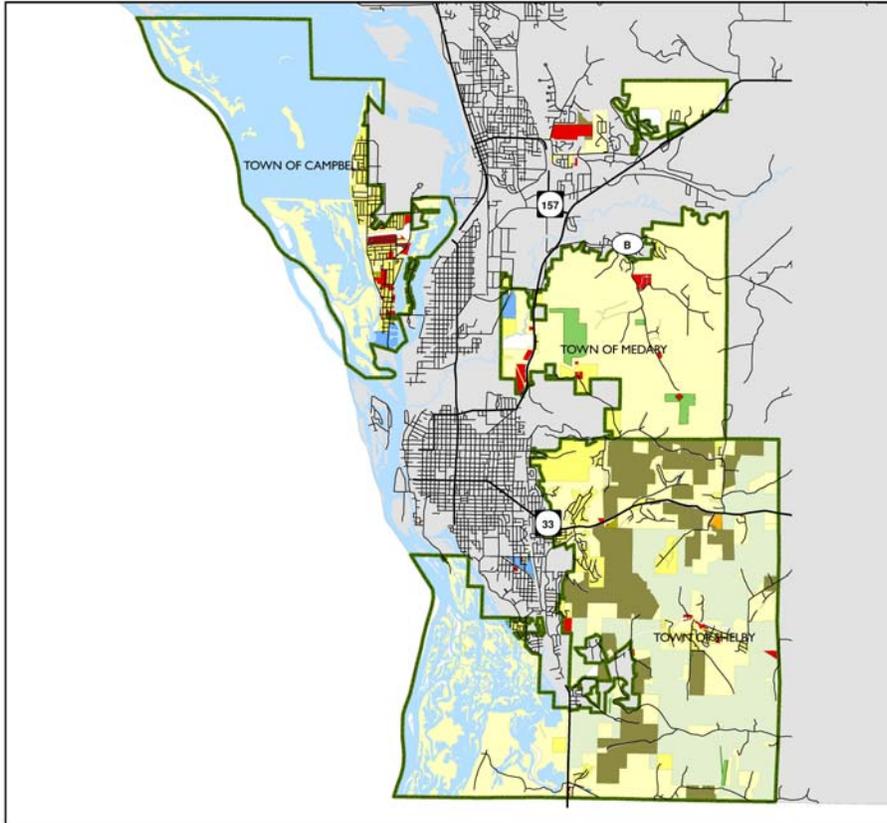


### Legend

Zoning Districts			
	Exclusive Agricultural		
	Agricultural "A"		
	Agricultural "B"		
	Transitional Agriculture		
	Mobile Home Court		

	<p>Map 4.12</p> <p><b>La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan</b></p> <p>January 2006</p>	<p>Source: La Crosse County Planning Dept. Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap</p>
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## Sub Area Group 5 Zoning



### Legend

Zoning Districts			
	Exclusive Agricultural		
	Agricultural "A"		
	Agricultural "B"		
	Transitional Agriculture		
	Mobile Home Court		

Map 4.13

**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2006

Source: La Crosse County Planning Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(4)(e)

(e) Land Use Supply, Demand, and Projections.

1. Land Use Supply. The supply of land to support development is based on several factors including physical suitability, local and County regulations, and community goals. Intergovernmental agreements and annexations also become considerations when looking at the available land supply at the community level. At the County level, land physically suited for development exists throughout. A conservative estimate, based on a study performed by the Geography Department at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, indicates there are nearly 190,000 acres that could be physically suited for development. The policies developed in this Plan and subsequent community plans will help guide how growth is managed in these areas.

2. Land Use Demand.

a. As development pressures increase, the demand for developable land also rises. An analysis of building trends in the 1990s indicates that approximately 3% of the County's farmland was converted out of an agricultural use between 1990 and 1997. Not surprisingly, this conversion factor was higher for Towns on the western side of the County. Towns surrounding Holmen, Onalaska, and La Crosse had close to 8% of their agricultural acreage converted to other uses.

b. Based on growth and housing projections provided by the State's Demographic Service Center, the County may need to accommodate nearly 5,000 acres of new residential, commercial, and industrial land along with additional acreage needed for infrastructure, parks, community facilities and similar uses.

3. Future Land Use Projections.

a. Future land use projections are located on the following page. These projections represent generalized growth scenarios based on state projections and current densities. It is anticipated that these general projections will be supplemented by more detailed projections performed for each community.

b. The calculations are based on the following sources and assumptions:

- i. State of Wisconsin- DOA Population and Household Growth Projections
- ii. Residential density is based on number of housing units per acre, 2000
- iii. Commercial and industrial uses are based on their 2000 ratio to residential development.

c. Note on Land Use data. In determining these ratios, land use estimates from the MRRPC and UW-La Crosse were considered. MRRPC data was ultimately utilized because it provided for a slightly larger demand for growth and developing acreage. For planning purposes, it was deemed appropriate to utilize the higher figure when creating general projections such as these.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(4)(e)3.c.

**Table 4.3: Generalized Land Use Projections**

	2010	2015	2020	2025	Estimated Total
<b>La Crosse County</b>					
Residential	956	787	841	933	3,517
Commercial	193	164	171	189	716
Industrial	186	163	169	183	701
Agriculture/Open Space	-1,335	-1,114	-1,181	-1,304	-4,934
<b>Sub Area 1</b>	<i>Burns, Farmington, Villages of Bangor and Rockland</i>				
Residential	75	55	62	72	265
Commercial	3	2	3	3	11
Industrial	10	8	8	10	35
Agriculture/Open Space	-88	-65	-73	-85	-311
<b>Sub Area 2</b>	<i>Bangor (T), Greenfield, Washington</i>				
Residential	47	35	40	43	165
Commercial	6	4	5	5	20
Industrial	4	3	4	4	15
Agriculture/Open Space	-57	-42	-49	-53	-201
<b>Sub Area 3</b>	<i>Barre, Hamilton, Village of West Salem</i>				
Residential	188	169	176	191	724
Commercial	75	67	70	76	289
Industrial	28	25	26	28	108
Agriculture/Open Space	-291	-261	-272	-296	-1,120
<b>Sub Area 4</b>	<i>Town of Holland, Onalaska, and Village of Holmen</i>				
Residential	374	332	347	377	1,430
Commercial	63	57	59	64	243
Industrial	101	91	95	102	388
Agriculture/Open Space	-538	-480	-501	-542	-2,061
<b>Sub Area 5</b>	<i>Towns of Campbell, Medary, Shelby</i>				
Residential	92	43	55	85	275
Commercial	15	8	10	15	49
Industrial	17	12	13	17	59
Agriculture/Open Space	-125	-64	-78	-116	-383
<b>Sub Area 6</b>	<i>City of La Crosse, City of Onalaska</i>				
Residential	179	154	160	165	658
Commercial	30	25	24	25	104
Industrial	26	24	23	22	95
Agriculture/Open Space	-235	-203	-207	-212	-858

Source: Schreiber/Anderson Associates, 2005

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(4)(f)

(f) Sources:

1. La Crosse County Development Plan 2020
2. UW-La Crosse Land Use Inventory
3. State Department of Administration Housing and Population

Projections.

(5) Agricultural Resources.

(a) Overview.

1. Agriculture has long been an important economic livelihood in La Crosse County. Because of its location along the Mississippi River, the region has used this amenity to ship agricultural products throughout the country and the world. Major crops include corn, soybeans, and dairy products.

2. La Crosse County is dedicated to the preservation of agriculture, and to promoting and encouraging best agricultural management practices, as outlined in the County's Land & Water Resource Management Plan. As of 1999 there were 350 farms in the County with Farmland Preservation Program Conservation Plans.

(b) Agricultural Resources Inventory.

1. According to the La Crosse County Land Information and Zoning classification, agriculture, livestock, pasturing and grazing activities are common land uses in the County. Farming is a key part of the local economy and is also a way of life for many residents. The agricultural landscape contributes greatly to the aesthetic appeal of the area. However, farmland often makes attractive land for housing development and as the region's population grows, farmland is rapidly disappearing.

2. Table 5.1 shows average farmland sales for La Crosse County towns from 1990-1997. County-wide, land converted out of agriculture sold for a higher value than land that remained in agriculture. However, in some towns, land continuing in agriculture sold for a higher value than land converted out of agriculture. County-wide, only three percent of agricultural land sold between 1990 and 1997 was converted out of agriculture.

**Table 5.1: Average Farmland Sales, 1990-1997**

	Number of parcels sold	Total acres	Acres continuing in agriculture	Acres converted out of agriculture	\$/acre of land continuing in agriculture	\$/acre of land converted out of agriculture	1990 acres of farmland	% sold and converted 1990-1997
Bangor Town	36	1,835	1,644	191	\$883	\$800	11,115	1.7%
Barre Town	17	1,185	1,007	178	\$1,008	\$632	8,429	2.1%
Burns Town	61	3,426	3,085	341	\$691	\$1,033	16,473	2.1%
Campbell Town	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	57	0.0%
Farmington Town	84	3,855	3,304	551	\$789	\$678	23,656	2.3%
Greenfield Town	37	1,877	1,675	202	\$936	\$1,273	8,373	2.4%
Hamilton Town	40	2,432	2,008	424	\$1,068	\$2,121	16,913	2.5%
Holland Town	36	1,494	733	761	\$1,378	\$3,959	9,820	7.8%
Medary Town	8	410	213	197	n/a	n/a	3,372	5.8%
Onalaska Town	47	2,404	1,635	769	\$1,082	\$1,204	11,294	6.8%
Shelby Town	8	220	194	26	\$718	n/a	5,296	0.5%
Washington Town	30	2,283	2,010	273	\$825	\$773	13,731	2.0%
All towns in La Crosse County	404	21,421	17,508	3,913	\$885	\$1,609	128,529	3.0%

Source: Wisconsin Town Land Use Data Project: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies, UW-Madison

LA CROSSE COUNTY 03/08

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(5)(b)3.

3. The U.S. Department of Commerce reported that farm earnings in La Crosse County decreased by 48 percent between 1990 and 1998, which was a greater decline than in the Mississippi River region (37 percent), the State of Wisconsin (26 percent) or the United States (2 percent).

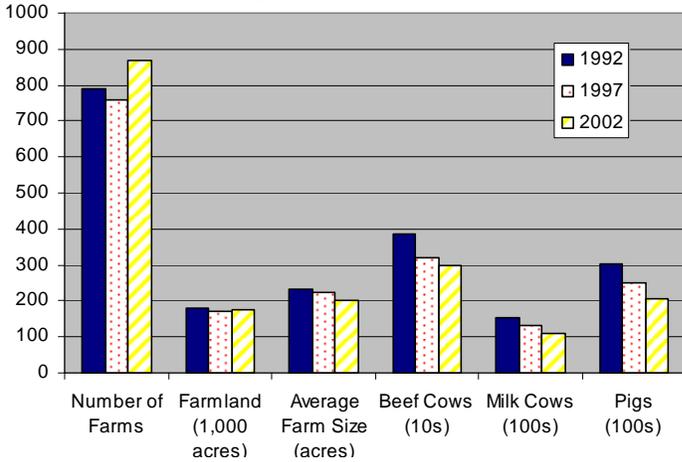
4. According to the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service, between 1992 and 1997 the following agricultural land trends occurred in La Crosse County:

- i. Land in farms decreased 7 percent from 182,339 to 169,543 acres
- ii. Average size of farms decreased 3 percent from 231 to 223 acres
- iii. Full-time farms decreased 21 percent from 507 farms to 403 farms
- iv. Market value of agricultural products sold decreased 5 percent to \$45,758,000 (crop sales accounted for 20 percent of the market value and livestock sales accounted for 80 percent of the market value)
- v. Average market value of agricultural products sold per farm decreased slightly from \$60,843 to \$60,287.

5. The State of Wisconsin showed similar agricultural trends during this time period. However, market value of agricultural products sold statewide increased by six percent and average market value of agricultural products sold per farm statewide increased by 10 percent.

6. Figure 5.1 depicts agricultural trends in La Crosse County from 1992 to 2002. In general, the number of farms increased, while the average farm size decreased. The amount of farmland in the County remained roughly the same. One notable change is that the number of beef cows, milk cows, and pigs dropped dramatically during this decade.

**Figure 5.1: La Crosse County Agricultural Trends, 1992-2002**



Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1992, 1997, 2002

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(5)(b)7.

7. Table 5.2 shows the population of La Crosse County residents living and working on farms in 2000. This table demonstrates that the Towns of Bangor, Burns, and Washington are the most dependent on agriculture as they have the highest percentage of residents living and working on farms. Also, approximately 10 percent of the population of the Towns of Barre, Farmington, and Hamilton live on farms.

**Table 5.2: Dependence on Agriculture (2000 Census)**

Town Name	Town Population	Population Living On Farms		Employed Adults Working on Farms	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Bangor town	583	105	18.0%	46	15.2%
Barre town	1,014	102	10.1%	28	4.7%
Burns town	979	108	11.0%	69	13.1%
Campbell town	4,410	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Farmington town	1,733	191	11.0%	73	8.1%
Greenfield town	1,538	131	8.5%	48	5.6%
Hamilton town	2,301	234	10.2%	75	6.3%
Holland town	3,042	181	6.0%	35	2.0%
Medary town	1,463	11	0.8%	2	0.2%
Onalaska town	5,210	89	1.7%	54	1.9%
Shelby town	4,687	32	0.7%	22	0.9%
Washington town	738	210	28.5%	84	23.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,698</b>	<b>1,394</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>3.6%</b>

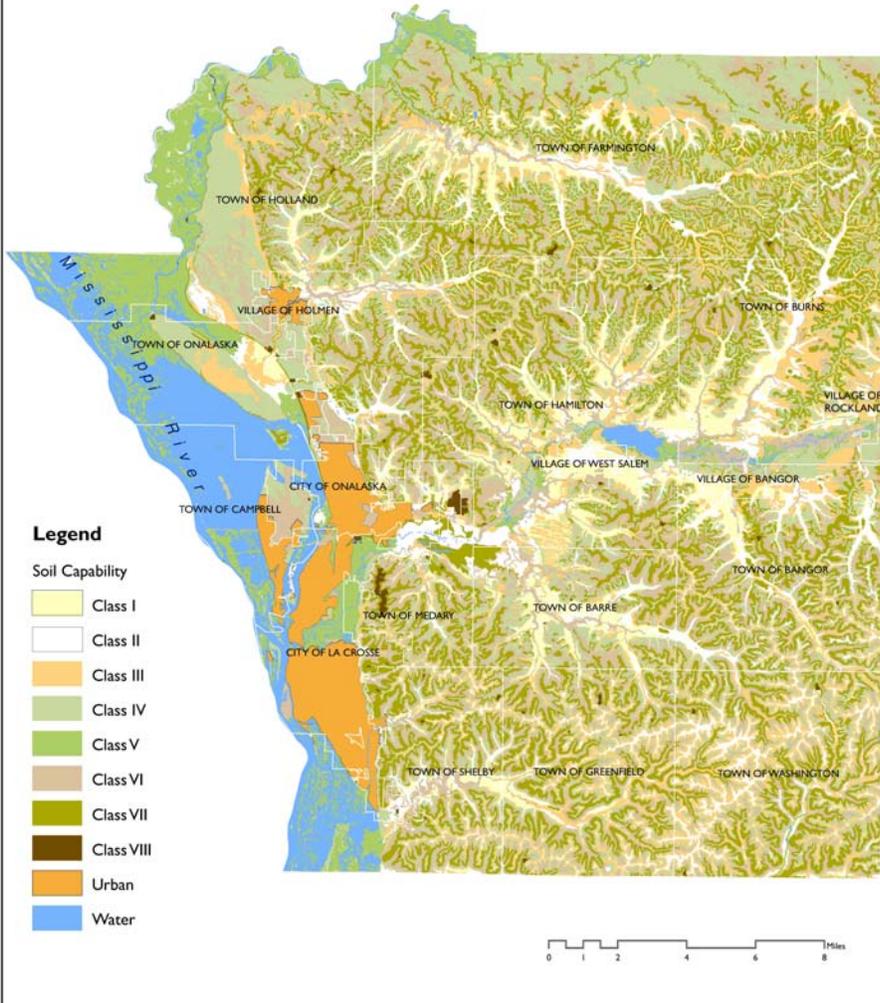
Source: Wisconsin Town Land Use Data Project: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies, UW-Madison

8. Soil suitability can indicate land that is best suited for farmland. Soil suitability classes for agriculture range from Class I to Class VIII. Class I has no significant limitations for raising crops. Classes II and III are suited for cultivated crops but have limitations such as poor drainage, limited root zones, climatic restrictions, or erosion potential. Class IV is suitable for crops but only under selected cropping practices. Classes V, VI, and VII are best suited for pasture and range while Class VIII is suited only for wildlife habitat, recreation, and other nonagricultural uses. La Crosse County soil classes are depicted on the Soil Classifications by Capability Map.

(c) Sources:

1. La Crosse County Farmland Preservation Plan 1980
2. La Crosse County Land and Water Conservation Plan 1999
3. La Crosse County Development Plan 2020
4. Wisconsin Town Land Use Data Project: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies, UW-Madison
5. U.S. Census of Agriculture 1992, 1997, 2002
6. Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service.

# Soil Classification by Capability



Map 5.1

La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan

January 2006



(6) NATURAL RESOURCES.

(a) Overview. The natural environment of La Crosse County contributes greatly to the residents' quality of life. A variety of unique natural resources are present throughout the County; these important resources are depicted on the Environmental Features Map and are discussed below.

(b) Groundwater.

1. Groundwater resources are plentiful in La Crosse County and it is the sole source of residential water supply for County residents. A sandstone and dolomite aquifer coupled with the soil geology of the area allow for rapid groundwater recharge, which supplies a constant supply of water. Groundwater in the area is generally considered to be of good quality; however, the area's porous soil geology, while allowing for rapid groundwater recharge, can also make the groundwater more susceptible to contamination. A groundwater study conducted for the County reported that there were over 160 groundwater contamination sites in La Crosse County in 2003, mostly in the vicinity of the Cities of La Crosse and Onalaska.

2. The information and recommendations generated from the County's groundwater study, development of municipal wellhead protection ordinances, and encouragement of concentrated developments that use municipal sanitary sewer systems will greatly assist in maintaining and protecting this buried treasure. These topics are discussed in detail in the Utilities and Community Facilities section of this report.

(c) Surface Water.

1. La Crosse County's surface waters are one of its most popular environmental resources from a recreational and aesthetic perspective. There are few natural inland lakes in La Crosse County, but the adjoining surface waters of the Mississippi River, Black River, Lake Onalaska, and Lake Neshonoc are the biggest contributors to surface water recreation. Collectively these waterways cover over 16,460 acres of surface water in the County.

2. One of the most significant water resources available to residents and visitors is Lake Onalaska. Excellent opportunities for boating, canoeing, sailing, fishing, hunting, birdwatching or simply enjoying wildlife abound. The 7,000-acre lake has depths to 40 feet, but the average depth is just eight feet. The lake was formed in 1937 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers finished the Dresbach, MN Lock and Dam 7. Lake Neshonoc was created in 1852 from the damming of the La Crosse River. This 687 acre lake is the second largest surface water body in the County and provides for the recreational opportunities of fishing, boating, swimming, camping, and picnicking. In addition, electricity is generated from the dam. The accumulation of sediment is the fate of all impounded waterways and in the 1980's sedimentation, siltation, and turbidity of the lake become such a major concern that the Lake Neshonoc Protection and Rehabilitation District was formed. Veterans Memorial Park Pond, another drainage impounded lake, is located between Medary and West Salem and covers 3.8 acres. Van Loon Lake, located in the northwest portion of the County, covers approximately 17 acres. This lake is located in the 4,281 acre Van Loon Wildlife Refuge and is categorized as a seeping lake with a depth of just three feet.

3. The La Crosse River, Black River, and 35 other creeks account for the remaining surface waters in the County, of which 28 are classified as trout streams. In total, the County has 273 miles of stream, or 983 surface acres, excluding any portion of the Mississippi River.

**Table 6.1: Surface Water by Basin**

Basin	Watershed	Water Body
<b>La Crosse River Basin</b>		
	Little La Crosse River Watershed	
	La Crosse River	Dutch Creek
	Big Creek	Burns Creek
	Fish Creek	Adams Creek
	Prairie Creek	Lake Neshonoc
	Lower La Crosse River Watershed	
	La Crosse River	Pleasant Valley Creek
	Neshonoc Creek	Bostwick Creek
	Larson Coulee Creek	Smith Valley Creek
	Gills Coulee Creek	Pammel Creek
	Coon Creek Watershed	
	Berge Coulee Creek	Mormon Creek
	Coon Creek	Chipmunk Coulee Creek
<b>Black River Basin</b>		
	Lower Black River Watershed	
	Black River	Long Coulee Creek
	Fleming Creek	Sand Lake Coulee Creek
	Halfway Creek	Lake Onalaska
	Johnson Coulee Creek	
	Big and Douglas Rivers Watershed	
	Sand Creek	Burr Oak Creek
	Davis Creek	Amborn Creek

Source: SAA, 2005

(d) Wetlands.

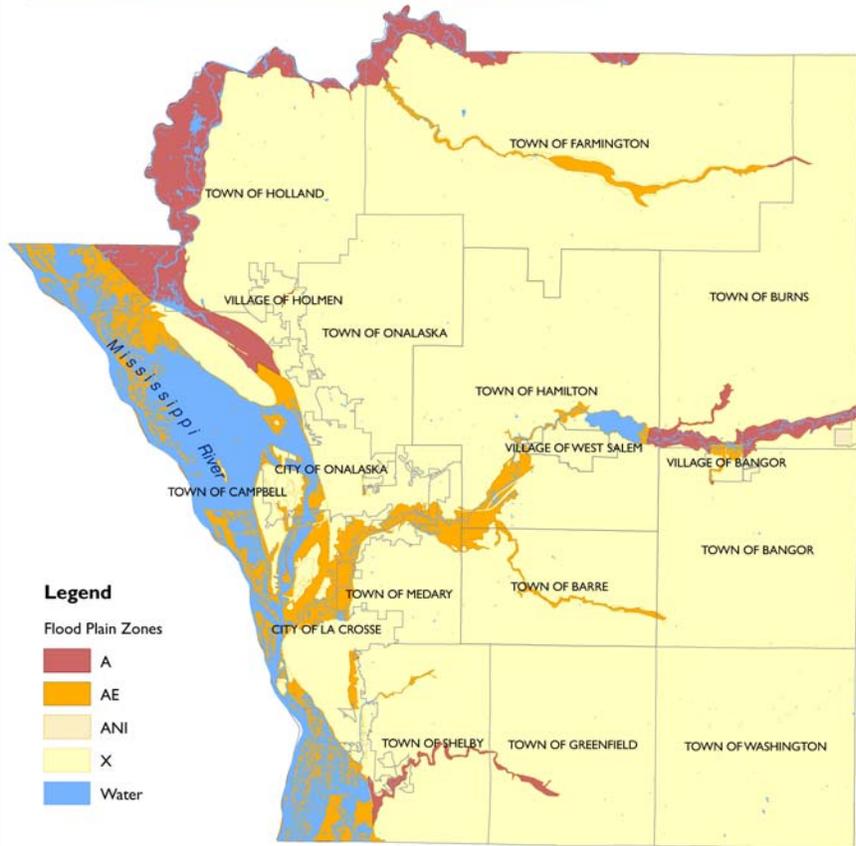
1. According to Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources there are 37,667 acres of wetlands of five (5) acres or more in La Crosse County, which accounts for approximately 13 percent of the County's total area. The majority of these wetlands lie within the Mississippi, Black, and La Crosse River watersheds.

2. Wetlands are defined in Wisconsin Statutes 23.32 as areas where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions. Wetlands are environmentally sensitive due to the many values and functions they provide, including:

- a. Filtering and replenishing groundwater.
- b. Flood protection – wetlands act like sponges by storing and slowly releasing rainfall and runoff, which reduces flood peaks and flood recovery costs.
- c. Filters for certain kinds of wastes and soluble contaminants generated from runoff, which protects water quality.
- d. Food and habitat for many plants and animals, which benefits hunting, fishing, sightseeing, and other recreational or tourism interests.
- e. Shoreline protection – wetlands protect shorelines from erosive wave action and enhance the quality of life by providing spacious and scenic open spaces.

3. The development of wetlands destroys the productive capacity of the ecosystem. Additionally, development costs are much higher in wetlands or areas with wet soils.

## FEMA Flood Zone Designations and Explanations



**Notes:**

- A: Areas subject to 100-year flood. Base flood elevation undetermined.
- AE: Areas subject to 100-year flood with base flood elevation determined.
- X: Areas outside the 500-year flood plain with less than 0.2% annual probability of flooding



Map 6.1

La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan

January 2006



Source: La Crosse County Planning Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

(e) Floodplains.

1. Floodplains are land areas that have been or may be covered by floodwater during the "regional flood". The regional flood is a flood determined to be representative of large floods known to have occurred in Wisconsin or which may be expected to occur on a particular lake, river or stream. Floodplains are identified and mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Nation's annual flood recovery costs are high and the human hardship beyond this is immeasurable. It is for this reason that the federal, state, and local governments encourage hazard mitigation planning that discourages floodplain development. Counties, cities, and villages are responsible for administering floodplain zoning in accordance with regulatory standards of Chapter NR 116 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and the standards of the National Flood Insurance Program.

2. Floodplains in La Crosse County are located adjacent to river corridors, Lake Onalaska, and along the east side of Brice Prairie in the Town of Onalaska. The FEMA Flood Zone Designations and Explanations Map designates the floodplains in La Crosse County that have been officially mapped by FEMA.

(f) Woodlands.

1. La Crosse County is located in a region of the country known as the Prairie-Forest Border, which forms the transition zone between the plains to the south and west and the forests to the north and east. Wisconsin forest statistics published in 1996 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported 136,500 acres of forest land in the County. Before European settlement and the resulting fire suppression, the vegetation in this region consisted of oak savanna and southern oak forest. The remaining forest cover is generally broad-leaved deciduous forest. Oak is the predominant hardwood with maple replacing some of the oak stands following logging. Extensive stands of bottomland hardwoods such as elm and cottonwood are found in the vicinity of the Black and Mississippi Rivers.

2. Woodlands perform important aesthetic, environmental, and ecological functions. La Crosse County's scenic wooded covered hills and coulees are one of the most attractive features of the landscape and have a major impact on residents and tourists alike. Woodlands also provide important settings, backdrops, and screens for homes, businesses, farms, roads, and shorelines, which creates an attractive landscape that benefits the economy and aesthetics of the County. In addition woodlands generate or contribute to energy, oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon cycles. They also provide essential habitats for numerous varieties of plants and animals and can mitigate the destructive affects of erosion, pollution, and severe weather.

3. The State's Managed Forest Law (MFL) program is available to landowners with 10 or more contiguous acres of forestland. Participating landowners must agree to a forest management plan that includes harvesting at least 80 percent of their forest area. In exchange, their land is taxed at a rate below the state average. As of 2003, 13,214 acres in La Crosse County were enrolled in MFL.

# Environmental Features





Map 6.2

**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2006



Source: La Crosse County Planning Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

(g) Landforms and Topography.

1. La Crosse County is in the heart of the driftless area, which covers southwestern Wisconsin, southeastern Minnesota, and northeast Iowa. This area was missed by the most recent glacial advance but was highly dissected by the glacial melt water created 11,000 years ago by the retreating glacier. The scenic ridges and valleys created by this melt water were named coulees by early French settlers resulting in this area becoming known as the "Coulee Region". Many of the ridges have bluffs of exposed limestone outcroppings. These bluffs are especially prominent on the western edge of the County along the Mississippi River and provide for majestic scenery that defines La Crosse County. Protecting these bluffs and ridgetops from poor development practices is becoming increasingly important as development activity continues to expand into rural areas.

2. Topographic elevations in the County range from about 640 feet to 1200 feet above sea level.

(h) Steep Slopes.

1. Steep slopes are found throughout La Crosse County and are the result of the driftless area topography in which the County is located. Steep slopes are environmentally sensitive from a water quality perspective because increased erosion and stormwater runoff occurs when these slopes are developed. The detrimental effect of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces such as rooftops and driveways increases greatly when such surfaces are constructed on steep slopes. La Crosse County has many creeks, some of which support trout fisheries. All of these creeks, as well as the larger rivers and lakes, are or could be recipients of runoff from development on steep slopes. The water quality of these rivers and creeks provides biologic, recreational, and aesthetic benefits. The creeks classified as trout streams, in particular, make handling of runoff from development on steep slopes especially critical if these sensitive aquatic environments are to be maintained or enhanced.

2. To protect the area's rivers, lakes, and streams from excessive stormwater runoff, the County Land Conservation Department and Committee enforce a construction site erosion control ordinance that calls for approval of an erosion control plan prior to construction activity taking place. This ordinance also prohibits construction activity from occurring on slopes of 30 percent or greater. Increased erosion control measures are called for in this ordinance when slopes of 20 percent or greater are to be disturbed. In addition, the Village of Holmen has stricter standards than the County and prohibits construction on slopes of 12 percent or greater.

3. In addition to erosion, sedimentation, and water quality problems, development on steep slopes can impair the natural beauty and viewsheds in the area. When development occurs on steep slopes, or on top of these steep slopes at higher elevations, it greatly impacts the visual character of the area as the development can dominate the viewshed.

4. The Environmental Features Map illustrates the abundance of land in La Crosse County with slopes of 20 percent or greater.

(i) Soils.

1. Soil suitability is a key factor in determining the best and most cost-effective locations for new development. Soil types and capability also help determine the viability of land for agricultural purposes. The soils of the County vary by their location and proximity to the area's rivers, and can be grouped into the following six categories:

- a. Silty soil on dolomite (lime rock) uplands
- b. Silty soils on sandstone uplands

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(6)(i)1.c.

- c. Rolling sandy soils on uplands
- d. Sandy soils of the Mississippi River Valley
- e. Silty soils of valleys and benches
- f. Wet bottom lands

2. These soils are discussed in detail in the La Crosse County Farmland Preservation Plan. Typically, the southern half of the County is dominated by the "silty soils on dolomite (lime rock) upland" category; the central part of the County along the La Crosse River contain soils associated with the "silty soils of valleys and benches" category; the northern part of the County contains soils of the "silty soils on sandstone uplands" category; and the area along the Mississippi River contains soils associated with "wet bottom lands" and "sandy soils of Mississippi River Valley".

(j) Wildlife, Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species.

1. River backwaters, wooded coulees, and remnant prairies provide excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife. Whitetail deer, squirrels, rabbits, ducks, geese, pheasants, grouse, and wild turkeys are abundant in La Crosse County. In addition, the area boasts outstanding fishery resources, including trout, walleye, northern pike, and panfish.

2. Over the last few decades La Crosse County, like many parts of the U.S., has experienced changes in the composition of its animal and plant life. Historically the majority of changes occurred through human encroachment and consequent disturbance to the wildlife and its habitat. Land uses that have drastically altered the natural environment such as the cutting of forests, wetland drainage, agriculture, and increased urbanization have resulted in the reduction of the quantity and quality of habitat for many species. This reduction in habitat has also resulted in the near extirpation of some species.

3. The U.S. government, in an attempt to protect biological resources, enacted the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973. The Act essentially prohibits the taking of a threatened or endangered species or its habitat. Wisconsin, in accordance with the ESA, has developed the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Working Lists. The Wisconsin Natural Heritage Working Lists contains species known or suspected to be rare in the state. The list and a map depicting the general location of these rare species can be viewed on the DNR website.

(k) Open Spaces, Environmental Corridors, and Environmentally Significant Areas.

1. There are many open spaces, environmental corridors, and environmentally significant areas in La Crosse County. Environmental corridors are continuous systems of open space that include environmentally sensitive lands, floodplains, wetlands, and natural resources requiring protection from disturbance and development, and land specifically designated for open space or recreational use. Important environmental corridors that are suitable for preservation include the river and stream corridors, the bluffs, the coulees, and the important wildlife habitats located throughout the County. The Environmental Features Map shows these important environmental areas.

2. In addition to the areas described above, there are other designated environmentally significant areas that should continue to be protected. Three State Natural Areas exist in La Crosse County. These are formally designated sites devoted to scientific research, the teaching of conservation biology, and the preservation of natural values and genetic diversity for future generations. The Natural Areas in La Crosse County include Midway Railroad Prairie in the Town of Onalaska, La Crosse River Trail Prairies located along the trail in La Crosse and Monroe Counties, and Great River Trail Prairies located along the trail in La Crosse and Trempealeau Counties.

LA CROSSE COUNTY 03/08

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(6)(k)3.

3. Two DNR Public Wildlife Recreation Land resources are found in La Crosse County. Van Loon Wildlife Area is approximately 4,000 acres and is located northwest of Holmen. Coulee Experimental Forest is located near Bangor and contains 3,000 acres.

4. Another significant open space and environmental corridor in the region is the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The refuge was established in 1924 and is one of the country's largest and most visited refuges with 3.5 million visitors annually. Lake Onalaska is part of this refuge, which hosts more than 265 species of birds, 57 species of mammals, 35 species of reptiles and amphibians, and more than 100 species of fish. The entire refuge encompasses nearly 200,000 acres and is over 260 miles long. From La Crosse County the refuge can easily be accessed by paddlers and birdwatchers from the Brice Prairie Landing or Lytle's Landing; by hikers and bikers from the Great River Trail; and by wildlife viewers from Midway.

(l) Mining and Non-Metallic Mineral Resources. A non-metallic mine is an area of one acre or greater where mineral aggregates or non-metallic minerals are extracted. As of October 2005, there are 15 registered non-metallic mining permits in La Crosse County for clay and rock, sand pits, or top soil mining. These permits are registered for sites in La Crosse, Onalaska, Plain, and West Salem. Non-metallic mining activities are expected to continue in La Crosse County because of the sand and gravel deposits found along the rivers. However, all mines must have a reclamation plan to ensure that they will be properly closed and reclaimed when mining activities are completed.

(m) Air Quality. The Wisconsin DNR classifies the La Crosse Metropolitan Area as an air quality attainment area. This designation means the area is not in violation of any air quality regulations. Because land use densities and configurations can both positively and negatively affect air quality, these must be carefully considered in the future to maintain the region's good air quality. As the County's population grows and more people and goods use the highways, attention will need to be focused on automobile and truck emissions' impact on air quality. Additionally, agricultural and industrial land uses can significantly impact air quality and should be carefully monitored as well.

(n) Sources:

1. La Crosse County Development Plan 2020 Wisconsin DNR, 2005
2. La Crosse County Land Conservation Department
3. La Crosse County Farmland Preservation Plan 1980
4. La Crosse County Land and Water Conservation Plan 1999
5. Numerical Simulation of Ground-Water Flow in La Crosse County, Wisconsin, and into Nearby Pools of the Mississippi River, USGS 2003
6. La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan 1998.

(7) Cultural Resources.

(a) Overview. Preservation of historic and cultural resources is important to the vitality of any community. It fosters a sense of pride and provides an important context for social and cultural continuity between the past, present, and future. La Crosse County has a rich cultural history that should be preserved and enhanced whenever possible.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(7)(b)

(b) Historic Properties and Districts.

1. There are numerous historic properties and sites in La Crosse County that are an important part of the County's historical past. As of 2005, 51 of these sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places in La Crosse County and 23 have been designated as local historic sites by the La Crosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission under the Certified Local Government Program. In addition to these sites, there are many properties in the County that are listed as local historic resources in the Wisconsin Historical Society's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) database. This database contains information about a wide range of historic properties located throughout the county and the state that create Wisconsin's distinct cultural landscape.

2. La Crosse County is home to one National Historic Landmark, the Hamlin Garland House, located in West Salem. The house was owned by Hamlin Garland who was born in West Salem in 1860. An historical plaque commemorates the site, which was designated in 1973.

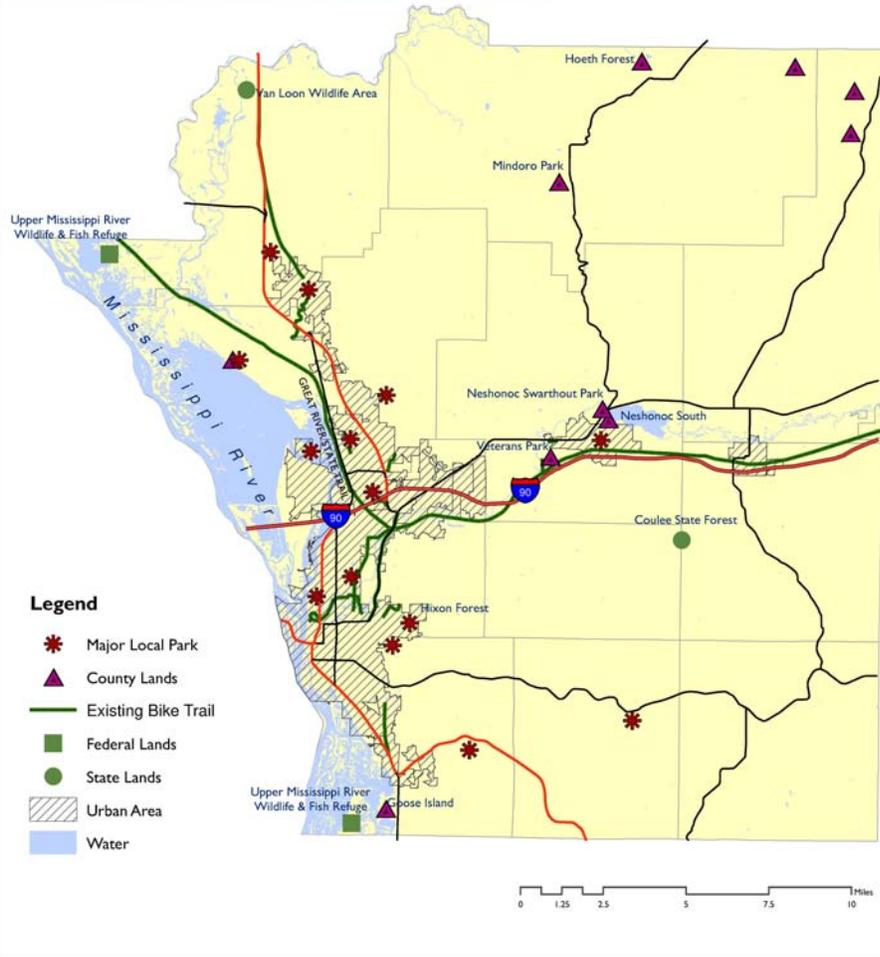
3. The La Crosse County Historical Society operates three facilities in the City of La Crosse that are open to the public: the Gideon Hixon House, the Swarthout Museum, and the Riverside Museum. These facilities provide residents and visitors an opportunity to further explore the County's historic past.

(c) Archaeological Resources.

1. La Crosse County is an attractive place to live and has been for many millennia. Native Americans inhabited the area for twelve thousand years prior to the arrival of the first white settlers. Survey and excavations have documented the presence of Paleoindian and Archaic camps, Woodland villages and mounds, and extensive Oneota agricultural villages. The latter includes cemeteries, long houses, and an elaborate ridge field system. Many of the archaeological sites have been documented by the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center (MVAC), which has displays open to the public at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. One example of the significant archaeological resources documented by MVAC is a major village on Brice Prairie in the Town of Onalaska, dating from between 1300 and 1400 AD, which is the earliest phase of the Oneota Tradition. As of 2005, over 1,000 archaeological sites have been recorded in La Crosse County, and 24 are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

2. Under Wisconsin law, Stat. 157.70 all burial sites, including Native American mounds, and both marked and unmarked burials, are protected from encroachment by any type of development.

## Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces



Map 7.1

La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan

January 2006

SAA  
Source: ESRI Data & Maps CD  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(7)(d)

(d) Parks and Recreation.

1. Over 37,300 acres of outdoor recreational areas can be found in La Crosse County, totaling approximately 58 square miles. These recreational areas account for 12 percent of the County's area. The recreational lands have great diversity in the types of experiences they provide and include federal and state wildlife refuge areas, trails, county parks and forests, town parks, school district parks, university and college recreation areas, campgrounds, rod and gun clubs, an alpine ski area, golf courses, rivers, lakes, and over 100 miles of trout streams.

2. Park facilities that are owned by La Crosse County include Goose Island, Veterans Park, Lake Neshonoc South Park, Neshonoc Swarthout Park, Mindoro Park, Brice Prairie/Swarthout Park, and two Lake Onalaska boat ramps in the Town of Onalaska. Both cities and all four villages in the County operate parks, as do the Towns of Holland, Onalaska, Medary, Campbell, Shelby, and Greenfield.

3. The federal and state owned lands that supplement the area's park and recreation system include the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Van Loon Wildlife Refuge, Coon Creek Fishing Area, Hamilton Fishing Area, Larson Coulee Trout Fishing Easement, Coulee Experimental Forest, Hixon Forest, the La Crosse County Forest Preserve, Lytle's Landing, the Great River State Trail, and the La Crosse River State Trail.

4. The variety of park and recreation areas allow for year-round enjoyment. The area's abundant water resources make canoeing, boating, waterskiing, and swimming, popular summer pastimes. The La Crosse Parks System includes 42 city parks, six county parks and playgrounds fully developed with picnic areas, playfields, tennis courts and shelters. Less than a mile from downtown La Crosse, citizens can enjoy Myrick Park Zoo. Hiking and biking trails, fully integrated with the Wisconsin system, attract many visitors to the area throughout the summer months.

5. During the winter months, well-groomed trails provide excellent snowmobiling and cross-country skiing opportunities. Mount La Crosse, a privately owned ski hill located in southern La Crosse County, offers downhill skiing. Frozen lakes and rivers provide anglers with opportunities for ice fishing throughout the winter season.

6. A complete discussion of the County's park and recreation facilities is provided in the 1998 La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Facility Plan, as well as in individual municipalities' outdoor recreation plans.

(e) Sources:

1. La Crosse County Development Plan 2020
2. La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan 1998
3. Wisconsin's Architecture and History Inventory, Wisconsin Historical Society Database.

(8) Housing.

(a) Overview.

1. The housing chapter required by the Wisconsin State Statute asks communities to look beyond the number of housing units that are available to residents in La Crosse County. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the quality, quantity, and other characteristics of the homes and those residing within them.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(8)(a)2.

2. The United States Census and the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration were used for source data for this chapter.

3. This overview provides a quick indication of the state of housing throughout the entire county. It is important to note that La Crosse County consists of various levels of density and urbanity, all of which offer a unique housing stock. Therefore, in order to truly understand the variety of homes available to residents in La Crosse County it is necessary to read through the entire chapter, where the county is broken out into six (6) sub-areas.

4. A community by community examination provides a deeper perspective into what La Crosse County has to offer. There are 43,479 housing units in La Crosse County, housing just over 107,000 people. The majority of homes throughout the County are owner occupied, while rental units make up approximately 35 percent of all household units. The vast majority of units are occupied with families; only ten (10) percent of County households are non-family households. The average household consists of 2.45 people, while the average La Crosse County family is larger with 3.02 members. These numbers reflect State averages, as the state average household has 2.5 members and the average family has 3.05 members. The population within housing units varies throughout the County. County-wide, 38 percent of households have one or more children under the age of 18. Similarly, 27 percent of households have one or more household members that are 60 years or older.

5. Physical characteristics of the housing stock help to define La Crosse County and how it is growing. The housing units within the County are primarily single-family detached homes. However, two (2) unit and ten (10) or more unit buildings each make up about ten (10) percent of the housing units found in the County. The County's housing stock has consistently grown over the past sixty (60) years, with between 10 and 20 percent of the housing stock being built each decade from 1940 to the present.

6. The houses in La Crosse County are statistically affordable for the average family living in the County. The average house in the County is valued at \$96,900, which is statistically speaking affordable for an average family income of \$50,380. Within the County, 83 percent of home owners spend below 30 percent of their income on housing. However, one third of all renters within the County spend over 30 percent of their income on housing costs.

7. The wide variety of housing types, prices, and populations, add to the value of La Crosse County as a whole.

(b) Housing Units.

1. Figure 8.1 displays the number of housing units within La Crosse County and how those units are distributed amongst municipalities and planning sub-areas. Table 8.1 also outlines the percentage of housing units that are occupied by the home owner, the percentage of units that are vacant. The majority of the communities within the County have owner occupancy rates around 80 percent, with the City of La Crosse and the City of Onalaska being lower with an owner occupancy rate of less than 70 percent. All communities have a vacancy rate between three (3) and five (5) percent, which is considered to be normal. The exception to that is the Village of Rockland where only 1.4 percent of housing units are vacant.

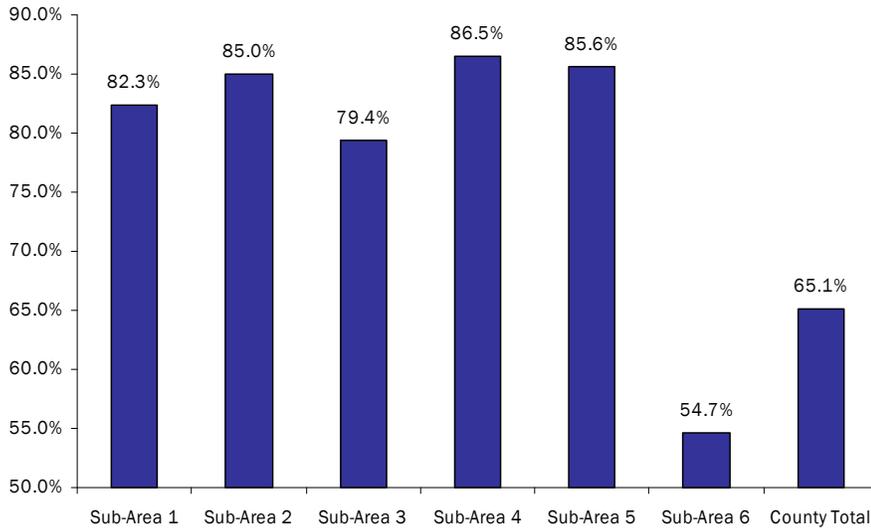
**Table 8.1: La Crosse County, Housing Occupancy, 2000**

	Total Housing Units	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant Units
Town of Burns	367	88.0%	12.0%	4.9%
Town of Farmington	706	85.8%	14.2%	5.9%
Village of Bangor	546	75.8%	24.2%	4.0%
Village of Rockland	215	78.3%	21.7%	1.4%
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>1,834</b>	<b>82.3%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>
Town of Bangor	227	75.0%	25.0%	4.8%
Town of Greenfield	570	89.8%	10.2%	3.7%
Town of Washington	236	82.9%	17.1%	3.4%
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>1,033</b>	<b>85.0%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
Town of Barre	354	83.6%	16.4%	2.0%
Town of Hamilton	732	87.8%	12.2%	4.8%
Village of West Salem	1,765	75.1%	24.9%	3.3%
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>2,851</b>	<b>79.4%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
Town of Holland	1,054	93.9%	6.1%	3.8%
Town of Onalaska	1,834	91.6%	8.4%	3.1%
Village of Holmen	2,377	79.2%	20.8%	5.0%
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>5,265</b>	<b>86.5%</b>	<b>13.5%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
Town of Campbell	1,823	77.1%	22.9%	3.8%
Town of Medary	553	89.2%	10.8%	4.2%
Town of Shelby	1,817	92.9%	7.1%	2.5%
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>4,193</b>	<b>85.6%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>
City of La Crosse	22,233	50.9%	49.1%	5.1%
City of Onalaska	6,070	68.1%	31.9%	2.9%
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>28,303</b>	<b>54.7%</b>	<b>45.3%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>43,479</b>	<b>65.1%</b>	<b>34.9%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

2. Figure 8.1 below demonstrates the owner occupancy rates found throughout La Crosse County. From this chart it is clear that County owner occupancy rate is significantly lowered by Sub-Area Six. Excluding Sub-Area Six (Cities of La Crosse and Onalaska), the remainder of the County has an owner occupancy rate that tends to be between 80 and 85 percent. Not surprisingly, rural areas of the community have a higher percentage of owner occupancy.

**Figure 8.1: La Crosse County, Owner Occupancy Rates, 2000**



Source U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

(c) Housing Characteristics.

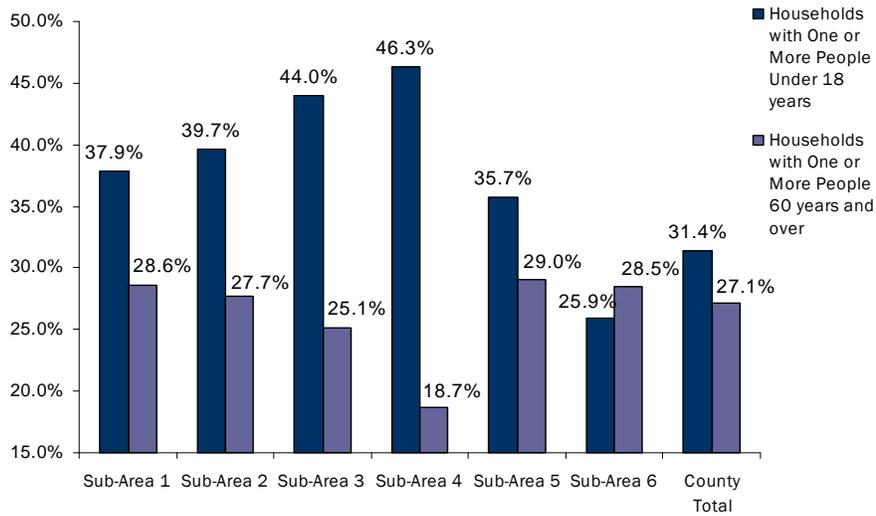
1. Table 8.2 below outlines the average size of both households and families within the County. It also identifies the percentage of households that consist of family versus non-family composition.

2. The average household in La Crosse County consists of 2.45 members, while the average family in the County is slightly larger with an average size of 3.02 members. This accurately represents the majority of the communities within the County. The Towns of Barre and Hamilton have slightly larger family sizes (3.29 and 3.26 respectively), while the City of La Crosse has a smaller average household size (2.23).

3. The majority of households in La Crosse County are made up of families. Approximately five percent of households are non-family households. The exception to this trend is the City of La Crosse, where 14.5 percent of households are made up of non-family members. This can be contributed, in part, to the high rate of college students sharing housing units.

4. Figure 8.2 demonstrates the diversity of ages within household members in the County. The majority of households in all communities have at least one household member that is either under 18 years old or is above 60 years old. The figure demonstrates that almost half of the households in Sub-Area Four, which includes the Towns of Holland and Onalaska and the Village of Holmen, have children living in them. The Towns of Campbell, Medary, and Shelby have the highest percentage of families with members over 60 years old, but they are consistent with other Sub-Areas within the County.

**Figure 8.2: La Crosse County, Percent of Households with People Under 18 and Over 55 Years Old, 2000**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

**Table 8.2: La Crosse County, Household Characteristics, 2000**

	Average Household Size	Average Family Size	Family Households	Non-family Households
Town of Burns	2.81	3.09	94.6%	5.4%
Town of Farmington	2.61	2.96	94.7%	5.3%
Village of Bangor	2.65	3.1	96.0%	4.0%
Village of Rockland	2.82	3.2	97.2%	2.8%
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>			95.4%	4.6%
Town of Bangor	2.7	3.08	94.0%	6.0%
Town of Greenfield	2.8	3.16	94.4%	5.6%
Town of Washington	2.83	3.21	96.5%	3.5%
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>			94.8%	5.2%
Town of Barre	2.92	3.29	96.3%	3.7%
Town of Hamilton	3.02	3.26	93.7%	6.3%
Village of West Salem	2.61	3.09	95.7%	4.3%
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>			95.2%	4.8%
Town of Holland	3	3.23	96.4%	3.6%
Town of Onalaska	2.93	3.17	96.0%	4.0%
Village of Holmen	2.74	3.17	94.6%	5.4%
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>			95.5%	4.5%
Town of Campbell	2.51	2.93	93.8%	6.2%
Town of Medary	2.76	3.14	94.0%	6.0%
Town of Shelby	2.65	3	96.8%	3.2%
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>			95.1%	4.9%
City of La Crosse	2.23	2.93	85.4%	14.6%
City of Onalaska	2.5	3	92.9%	7.1%
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>			87.0%	13.0%
<b>County Total</b>	2.45	3.02	89.9%	10.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

(d) Units in Structure.

1. Table 8.3 outlines the various number of units that are available within a housing structure. In La Crosse County, single family detached homes are the most common type of housing. Single family detached homes account for at least three quarters of the housing units in most communities. Exceptions include the Town of Barre, the Village of West Salem, and the City of Onalaska where that type of unit makes up two thirds of the housing stock or less. Half of the units in the City of La Crosse are single family detached units.

2. In the Towns of Barre, Burns, Greenfield, and the Village of Holmen the mobile homes make up between over 20 percent of the housing stock. The City of La Crosse provides the most multi-family units in the County, as 40 percent of the housing structures in that sub-area have two or more units in them. The Towns of Barre, Hamilton, and the Village of West Salem are unique in the balance of housing types that are found there; 70 percent of their homes are single family, while the other 30 percent is evenly split between multi-family units and mobile homes. This balance provides many options for residents in that area.

**Table 8.3: La Crosse County, Type of Unit in Structure by Percentage, 2000**

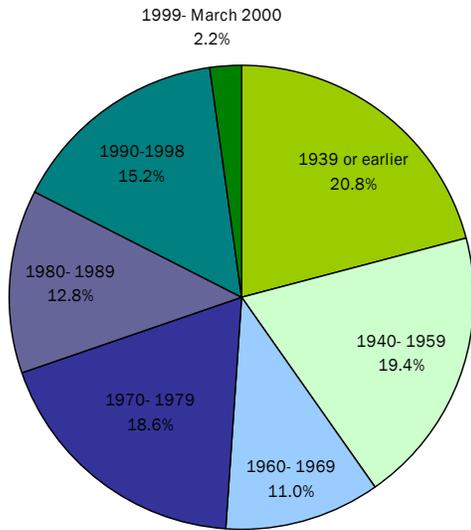
	Total Occupied Units	1-Unit, Detached (%)	1-Unit, Attached (%)	2 Units (%)	3 or 4 Units (%)	5 to 9 Units (%)	10 or More Units (%)	Mobile Home (%)
Town of Burns	359	74.1	0.6	1.7	0	0	0	23.7
Town of Farmington	661	82.9	0.5	2.3	0.8	1.5	0	12.1
Village of Bangor	517	80.7	2.3	3.7	2.1	6.8	4.5	0
Village of Rockland	225	74.2	1.3	7.1	1.3	0.9	6.7	8.4
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>1,762</b>	<b>79.3%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
Town of Bangor	205	85.9	0	2	0	0	0	12.2
Town of Greenfield	557	74.1	0.4	3	0	1.4	0	20.6
Town of Washington	233	88	1.7	0.9	2.1	0	0	7.3
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>79.8%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>
Town of Barre	356	67.4	1.7	2.5	3.7	0	0	24.7
Town of Hamilton	704	93.2	1.1	2.3	0.3	0	0	3.1
Village of West Salem	1,692	56.3	4.7	13.4	2.8	4.1	2.7	15.6
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>2,752</b>	<b>67.2%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>
Town of Holland	1,020	90.1	1.8	1.2	0	0	0	7
Town of Onalaska	1,682	91	1.2	2.3	1.1	1.3	0	3.2
Village of Holmen	2,311	60.3	1.8	5.1	2.2	5.1	3.8	21.9
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>5,013</b>	<b>76.7%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
Town of Campbell	1,792	80.7	0.9	3.5	3.9	5.2	3	2.7
Town of Medary	556	85.6	1.3	5.2	0.9	0	0.4	6.7
Town of Shelby	1,752	88.1	1	2.5	0.5	0	1.6	6.4
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>4,100</b>	<b>84.5%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>
City of La Crosse	21,048	50.3	3.4	12.8	6.9	6.1	18	2.5
City of Onalaska	5,929	57.4	5.5	10.3	2.2	7.4	9.6	7.6
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>26,977</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>41,599</b>	<b>60.9%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

(e) Age of Housing Structures.

1. Figure 8.3 below outlines the age of homes within La Crosse County. Each decade between 10 and 20 percent of the housing stock has been constructed. Table 8.4 depicts the varied housing age for La Crosse County communities and shows that individual areas within the County have experienced substantially different development rates.

**Figure 8.3: La Crosse County, Age of Housing as a Percentage of the Total Housing Stock, 2000**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

2. Each area within La Crosse County has experienced housing growth at different times throughout the past century as is demonstrated in the following table. The Towns of Farmington and Washington and the City of La Crosse saw most of their homes constructed prior to 1970. This is in contrast to the Towns of Barre, Onalaska, Medary, and the Village of West Salem, where the majority of homes were constructed after 1970. In the Town of Holland and the Village of Holman over one third of the homes have been constructed within the past 15 years. In comparison only 13 percent of the homes in the rest of La Crosse County have been constructed in the past 15 years. The different growth patterns occurring throughout the County should be noted as this planning process continues.

**Table 8.4: La Crosse County, Age of Housing Structures as Percentage of Housing Stock, 2000**

	Total Housing Units	1939 or earlier (%)	1940-1959 (%)	1960-1969 (%)	1970-1979 (%)	1980-1989 (%)	1990-1998 (%)	1999- March 2000 (%)
Town of Burns	359	27.9	8.6	8.6	21.4	16.2	16.2	1.1
Town of Farmington	661	37.5	10	5.6	16.5	12.7	14.3	3.3
Village of Bangor	517	31.7	11.8	6	12.2	13.5	20.7	4.1
Village of Rockland	225	21.3	8	6.7	21.3	15.1	25.3	2.2
Sub-Area 1	1,762	31.8%	10.0%	6.5%	16.9%	14.0%	18.0%	3.0%
Town of Bangor	205	25.9	15.6	6.3	16.6	21	11.7	2.9
Town of Greenfield	557	18.7	3.9	10.6	31.1	12.9	19.9	2.9
Town of Washington	233	43.8	11.2	10.3	12.4	9.4	9.9	3
Sub-Area 2	995	26.0%	8.0%	9.6%	23.7%	13.8%	15.9%	2.9%
Town of Barre	356	19.9	4.8	13.5	27.2	10.1	21.1	3.4
Town of Hamilton	704	22.9	8.8	5.8	19.6	19	18.5	5.4
Village of West Salem	1,692	18	13.1	7.7	18.7	12.3	26.5	3.7
Sub-Area 3	2,752	19.5%	10.9%	8.0%	20.0%	13.7%	23.7%	4.1%
Town of Holland	1,020	10.3	4.3	4.5	24	18.8	33.1	4.9
Town of Onalaska	1,682	9.5	9.7	14.2	29.4	13.9	21	2.3
Village of Holmen	2,311	5.4	5.7	7.6	20.5	16.8	37	7.2
Sub-Area 4	5,013	7.8%	6.7%	9.2%	24.2%	16.2%	30.8%	5.1%
Town of Campbell	1,792	7.4	20.6	20	24.5	15.1	10.5	1.9
Town of Medary	556	8.8	16.4	13.3	30.9	16.2	14.1	0.4
Town of Shelby	1,752	4.4	22.2	18.8	27	12	15.5	0
Sub-Area 5	4,100	6.3%	20.7%	18.6%	26.4%	14.0%	13.1%	0.9%
City of La Crosse	21,048	30.1	26.9	10.9	13	9.7	8.1	1.3
City of Onalaska	5,929	5.1	11	10.7	27.2	19.6	24	2.3
Sub-Area 6	26,977	24.6%	23.4%	10.9%	16.2%	11.9%	11.6%	1.5%
County Total	41,599	20.8%	19.4%	11.0%	18.6%	12.8%	15.2%	2.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

(f) Housing Values.

1. Table 8.5 outlines the values of owner occupied housing units within La Crosse County. The median home value in the County is \$96,900. The Town of Washington has the lowest median home value at \$82,500, while the Town of Shelby has the highest median housing value at \$129,500. Between 65 and 80 percent of all homes within each Sub-Area are between \$50,000 and \$150,000.

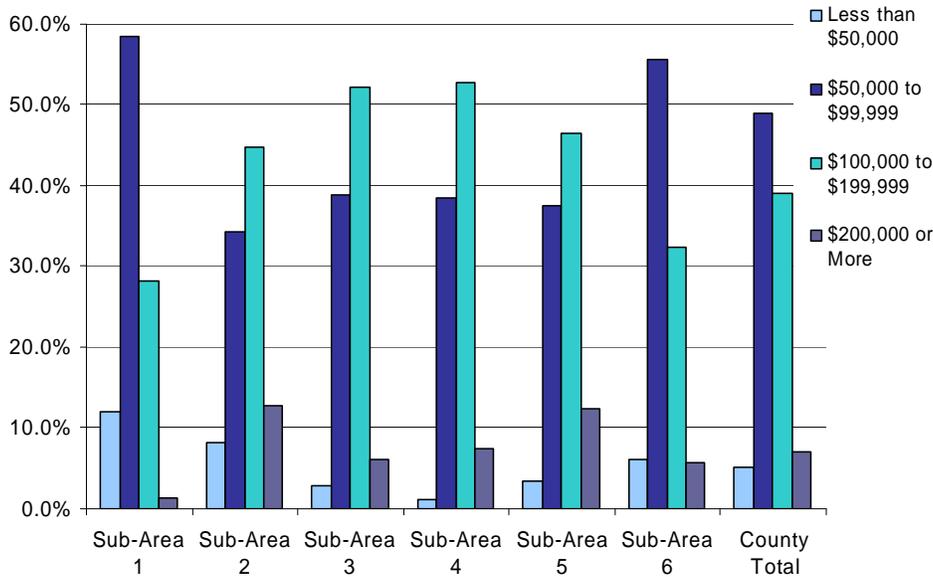
**Table 8.5: La Crosse County, Median Value and Value of Owner Occupied Units as a Percentage of Housing Stock, 2000**

	Total Owner Occupied Units	Median (dollars)	Less than \$50,000 (%)	\$50,000 to \$99,999 (%)	\$100,000 to \$149,999 (%)	\$150,000 to \$199,999 (%)	\$200,000 to \$299,999 (%)	\$300,000 or More (%)
Town of Burns	134	\$90,600	11.9	50	31.3	5.2	1.5	0
Town of Farmington	258	\$84,500	15.5	54.3	23.3	5.4	0.8	0.8
Village of Bangor	376	\$90,600	10.4	59.6	26.1	2.7	0.8	0.5
Village of Rockland	159	\$79,400	10.1	69.8	17	1.9	1.3	0
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>927</b>		<b>12.0%</b>	<b>58.5%</b>	<b>24.5%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
Town of Bangor	73	\$87,000	17.8	41.1	27.4	11	0	2.7
Town of Greenfield	280	\$128,200	5.7	25.7	37.9	12.9	14.6	3.2
Town of Washington	72	\$82,500	8.3	61.1	22.2	5.6	2.8	0
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>425</b>		<b>8.2%</b>	<b>34.4%</b>	<b>33.4%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
Town of Barre	157	\$124,300	5.1	34.4	25.5	14	17.8	3.2
Town of Hamilton	471	\$123,800	5.1	25.3	33.5	24	11.3	0.8
Village of West Salem	912	\$102,500	1.3	46.6	43.5	8	0.5	0
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>1,540</b>		<b>2.9%</b>	<b>38.8%</b>	<b>38.6%</b>	<b>13.5%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
Town of Holland	698	\$123,400	1.4	28.2	40.4	18.5	11.5	0
Town of Onalaska	1,291	\$111,100	0	39.8	42.1	6.5	10.3	1.2
Village of Holmen	1,330	\$106,700	2.1	42.8	33.6	20	1.5	0
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>3,319</b>		<b>1.1%</b>	<b>38.6%</b>	<b>38.4%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
Town of Campbell	1,313	\$94,600	6.9	49.8	28	8.6	3.9	2.8
Town of Medary	396	\$128,500	1.5	26.5	42.4	19.4	8.8	1.3
Town of Shelby	1,415	\$129,500	0.8	29.4	31.8	19.5	12.9	5.5
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>3,124</b>		<b>3.5%</b>	<b>37.6%</b>	<b>31.5%</b>	<b>14.9%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>
City of La Crosse	9,198	\$85,100	8.2	61.8	20	6.4	2.5	1.2
City of Onalaska	3,348	\$114,400	0.6	38.7	32.9	16.3	8.2	3.3
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>12,546</b>		<b>6.1%</b>	<b>55.7%</b>	<b>23.4%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>21,881</b>	<b>\$96,900</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>49.0%</b>	<b>28.2%</b>	<b>10.8%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

2. Figure 8.6 below identifies that in most of the County; nearly 50 percent of homes are valued between \$100,000 and \$199,999. In Sub-Areas One and Six, over 50 percent of the homes are valued between \$50,000 and \$99,999.

**Figure 8.6: La Crosse County, Owner Occupied Housing Unit Value as a Percentage of the Total Housing Stock, 2000**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

(g) Affordability of Housing.

1. The two tables, 8.6 and 8.7, outline how much residents in the County spend on home related expenses. The first table relates to owner occupied units and the second concerns renters in the County. Overall, over 80 percent of home owners spend less than 30 percent of their income on their home. On the other hand one third of renters spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. It is generally recommended that a person should spend up to 30 percent of their income on housing costs in order to balance other costs within their budget.

**Table 8.6: La Crosse County, Percent of Income Spent on Owner Occupied Units, 2000**

	Total Owner Occupied Units	Less than 15 percent (%)	15 to 30 percent (%)	30 percent or more (%)	Not computed (%)
Town of Burns	134	50.7	32.9	14.9	1.5
Town of Farmington	258	48.1	39.6	12.5	0
Village of Bangor	376	43.1	42.8	14.1	0
Village of Rockland	159	37.7	43.4	18.9	0
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	927	44.7%	40.6%	14.6%	0.2%
Town of Bangor	73	52.1	35.7	12.3	0
Town of Greenfield	280	38.6	37.9	23.6	0
Town of Washington	72	44.4	43.1	12.5	0
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	425	41.9%	38.4%	19.8%	0.0%
Town of Barre	157	47.8	37.6	14.6	0
Town of Hamilton	471	35	46.9	18	0
Village of West Salem	912	41.3	43.1	15.6	0
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	1540	40.1%	43.7%	16.2%	0.0%
Town of Holland	698	27.2	55.6	16.7	0.6
Town of Onalaska	1291	30.8	53.1	15.1	1
Village of Holmen	1330	20.6	51.2	28.2	0
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	3319	26.0%	52.8%	20.7%	0.5%
Town of Campbell	1,313	45.1	41.5	13.4	0
Town of Medary	396	46.2	35.5	17.7	0.5
Town of Shelby	1,415	48.3	40.3	10.7	0.6
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	3,124	46.7%	40.2%	12.7%	0.4%
City of La Crosse	9,198	38.6	42.8	18	0.6
City of Onalaska	3,348	33.3	52.3	13.8	0.6
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	12,546	37.2%	45.3%	16.9%	0.6%
<b>County Total</b>	21,881	37.5%	45.2%	16.8%	0.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

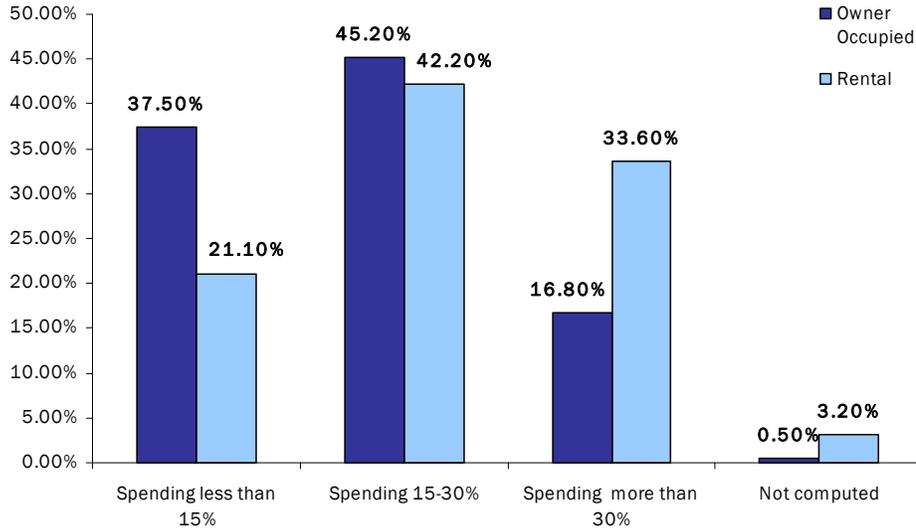
**Table 8.7: La Crosse County, Percent of Income Spent on Renter Occupied Units, 2000**

	Total Occupied Rental Units	Less than 15 percent (%)	15 to 30 percent (%)	30 percent or more (%)	Not computed (%)
Town of Burns	27	33.3	51.8	7.4	7.4
Town of Farmington	70	35.7	40	15.8	8.6
Village of Bangor	126	28.6	39.6	26.2	5.6
Village of Rockland	47	31.9	27.6	27.7	12.8
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>31.5%</b>	<b>38.9%</b>	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>
Town of Bangor	28	42.9	7.1	21.4	28.6
Town of Greenfield	53	26.4	32	22.6	18.9
Town of Washington	25	20	20	32	28
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>24.5%</b>	<b>23.6%</b>
Town of Barre	48	29.2	37.6	14.6	18.8
Town of Hamilton	36	41.7	58.3	0	0
Village of West Salem	443	23.9	46.3	22.1	7.7
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>46.3%</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>
Town of Holland	51	27.5	33.3	23.5	15.7
Town of Onalaska	139	7.2	75.5	2.9	14.4
Village of Holmen	455	15.6	53.6	29.7	1.1
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>56.7%</b>	<b>23.4%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>
Town of Campbell	411	31.4	38.7	26	3.9
Town of Medary	53	43.4	41.5	9.4	5.7
Town of Shelby	89	18	49.4	23.6	9
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>40.7%</b>	<b>24.1%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
City of La Crosse	10380	19.2	41.8	36.2	2.8
City of Onalaska	1877	27.4	39.8	31.6	1.2
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>12257</b>	<b>20.5%</b>	<b>41.5%</b>	<b>35.5%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>14,358</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>42.2%</b>	<b>33.6%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

2. Owners within La Crosse County are overall, spending within the recommended 30 percent guideline on housing costs. Sub-Areas Two and Four are two areas in which home owners are spending more than is recommended on housing. Twenty percent of home owners are spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

**Figure 8.7: La Crosse County, Percent of Income Spent on Housing Costs, 2000**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

(h) Housing Projections.

1. Overall La Crosse County is expected to derive demand for over 8,000 new households over the next twenty years.

2. The table below outlines the number of households currently in the County as well as the projected growth in households there is expected to be over the next twenty years. The projections provided for the next twenty years have been provided by the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). The projections have been reached by closely monitoring past growth trends within the county and surrounding areas.

**Table 8.8: La Crosse County, Wisconsin DOA Housing Projections to 2025**

	Total households		Projected Households			
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Town of Burns	349	357	366	369	375	382
Town of Farmington	664	710	756	793	832	878
Village of Bangor	524	562	599	630	663	699
Village of Rockland	212	231	250	266	283	302
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>1,749</b>	<b>1,860</b>	<b>1,971</b>	<b>2,058</b>	<b>2,153</b>	<b>2,261</b>
Town of Bangor	216	223	230	234	240	246
Town of Greenfield	549	568	585	597	611	627
Town of Washington	228	241	255	267	280	293
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>993</b>	<b>1,032</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>1,098</b>	<b>1,131</b>	<b>1,166</b>
Town of Barre	347	371	393	412	431	454
Town of Hamilton	697	775	851	919	991	1,068
Village of West Salem	1,706	1,857	2,004	2,142	2,283	2,428
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>2,750</b>	<b>3,003</b>	<b>3,248</b>	<b>3,473</b>	<b>3,705</b>	<b>3,950</b>
Town of Holland	1,014	1,130	1,246	1,351	1,460	1,577
Town of Onalaska	1,777	1,892	2,002	2,095	2,194	2,304
Village of Holmen	2,258	2,570	2,879	3,163	3,457	3,771
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>5,049</b>	<b>5,592</b>	<b>6,127</b>	<b>6,609</b>	<b>7,111</b>	<b>7,652</b>
Town of Campbell	1,754	1,801	1,844	1,870	1,900	1,941
Town of Medary	530	551	570	584	599	618
Town of Shelby	1,771	1,799	1,821	1,827	1,837	1,856
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>4,055</b>	<b>4,151</b>	<b>4,235</b>	<b>4,281</b>	<b>4,336</b>	<b>4,415</b>
City of La Crosse	21,110	21,365	21,568	21,709	21,854	21,968
City of Onalaska	5,893	6,449	6,996	7,485	7,996	8,546
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>27,003</b>	<b>27,814</b>	<b>28,564</b>	<b>29,194</b>	<b>29,850</b>	<b>30,514</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>41,599</b>	<b>43,452</b>	<b>45,215</b>	<b>46,713</b>	<b>48,286</b>	<b>49,958</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

(i) Sources. U.S. Bureau of the Census and State of Wisconsin Department of Administration.

(9) Transportation.

(a) Overview. The La Crosse County transportation system is the collection of many modes and technologies, all with the goal of moving people and goods throughout the County, western Wisconsin, and the nation. The interchange of goods, services, and ideas provided through a functioning transportation system is the basis for the County's economy. The County's transportation policies and programs strive:

1. to achieve a safe and efficient transportation system,
2. to provide personal mobility for all segments of the population,
3. to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive impacts on the County's natural, economic, and social environments, and
4. to shape future growth and enable infill development.

(b) Current Commuting Patterns.

1. Like the rest of the country, the La Crosse County area has experienced a significant increase in the percent of workers working outside the home who drive alone to work. The 2030 La Crosse and La Crescent Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan analyzed census data to understand commuting patterns and mode choice.

2. Despite a fixed-route transit system in the City of La Crosse, an extensive network of bike routes, and pedestrian paths, the percentage of workers using private vehicles increased between 1990 and 2000. Because the eastern portion of La Crosse County is extensively rural in nature, the percent of workers 16 and older who worked outside of the home who drive alone to work in 2000 was somewhat higher at 90.2 percent than the percent of workers who drove alone (83.8 percent) in the urbanized area.

3. The County's development patterns, natural and manmade barriers, and Wisconsin winters can make traveling by non-motorized means challenging. Two-worker family households; high growth in Holmen, Onalaska, and West Salem; and three-quarters of all commuters living outside of La Crosse commuting into La Crosse make vehicle ownership a basic necessity for most. Over half of the area's households own two or more vehicles.

(c) Existing Transportation Facilities.

1. To that end, this section of the Existing Conditions Report reviews and summarizes the current provision of transportation services in La Crosse County, reviews state and regional transportation plans and programs, and reviews all available transportation modes available in La Crosse County. This section is divided between the movement of people and goods, with the movement of people organized by trip type. Within the movement of people, first reviewed is longer distance, intercity travel opportunities – the interstate system and state routes, airport, intercity transit, and passenger rail service. This section then examines intra-city transportation opportunities, County and local streets, local transit services, bicycling facilities, and pedestrian facilities.

2. The La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) has completed the 2030 La Crosse and La Crescent Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan, which is the new long-range transportation plan for the La Crosse and La Crescent area. The plan was adopted by the LAPC on August 17, 2005. Chapter 5 of the plan contains a highly detailed analysis and description of all transportation modes available in La Crosse County. Any reader of this section of the Existing Conditions Report seeking further details should consult Chapter 5 of the Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(9)(d)

(d) Movement of Goods. A 1996 study showed that Wisconsin's freight movements were accommodated through three modes: trucks on highway (58 percent), rail (33 percent), and water (9 percent). All three cargo modes are available in La Crosse County. The convergence of highway, rail, and water cargo facilities in La Crosse County provides the opportunity for a fully intermodal terminal for freight distribution. The County's closest intermodal terminals are in Minneapolis/St. Paul and Chicago.

1. Highways. The officially designated trucks routes within La Crosse County are the interstate system and three US Highway routes and four state highways: I-90, USH 53, USH 14/61, STH 157, STH 35, STH 33, and STH 16. Interstate 90 from the Monroe County line into Minnesota is an east-west truck route, while STH 16 crosses the majority of the County in an east-west fashion. North-south routes are STH 35 from Vernon County, USH 14/61 through the City of La Crosse into La Crescent, USH 53 to connect with I-90, STH 16 parallels the eastern boundary of the City of La Crosse, and USH 53 north to Trempealeau County. There are truck stops located adjacent to I-90 near the Monroe County line (20 truck parking stalls) and near the Mississippi River (19 truck parking stalls). See the Truck Routes Map for a depiction of officially designated truck routes and truck stops.

2. Water.

a. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, one barge is equivalent to 15 jumbo hoppers on rail or nearly 60 trucks on the highways. Water freight movement is highly efficient, but its flexibility is very limited. A combination of efficient water freight movement and flexible trucking allow for cost-effective freight movement.

b. Direct water access for waterborne freight is available through both public and private terminals in the City of La Crosse and the Town of Campbell. The Port of La Crosse serves incoming and outgoing barge traffic on the Mississippi River. The port handles nearly 1.2 million metric tons of commodities annually and offers connections to the Upper Midwest and the world, including Russia, South America, Mexico, China, and other regions. Products commonly received include rock salt, coal, pig iron, liquid caustic soda, cement, asphalt, iron ore, aggregate, and cottonseed. Manufactured machinery (heating and cooling units from Trane and Chart) and farm products are typical commodities shipped out of the region by barge.

c. The City and County Harbor Commissions prepared the Port of La Crosse Harbor Plan in 1999. The County Harbor Commission feels that the Harbor Plan should be updated, particularly to include consideration of homeland security issues. One recommendation of the 1999 plan was to reduce the redundancy of the City and County Harbor Commissions; the County Harbor Commission concluded in 2004 that two commissions should be maintained.

d. The Port of La Crosse has rail access and highway access.

3. Rail Freight.

a. The County has rail cargo service through three Class I railroad companies, all of which provide direct access to Chicago and connections to eastern points. The Canadian Pacific Railway connects La Crosse to Milwaukee and Minneapolis/St. Paul. This company provides service, or potentially could provide service, to Rockland, Bangor, West Salem, and the north side of La Crosse. The Union Pacific Railroad operates with trackage rights on the Canadian Pacific between Tomah and Winona. The Burlington Northern & Santa Fe operates in the far western part of the County in a north-south orientation and provides service to industries on the south side of La Crosse and Onalaska.

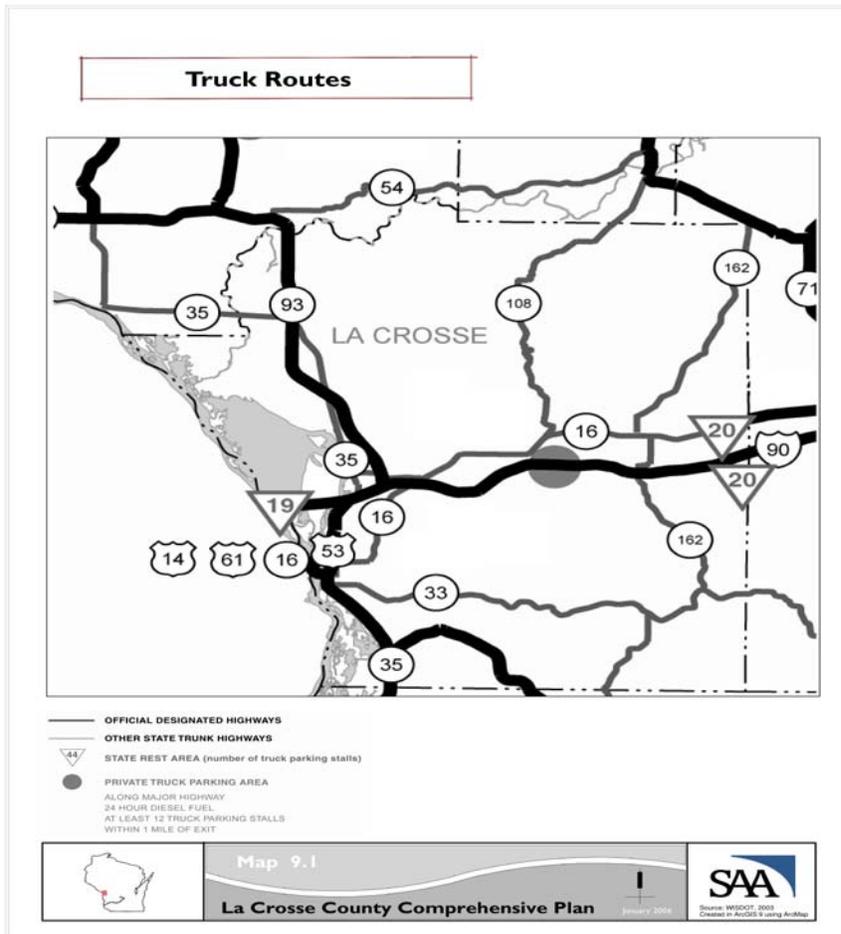
b. The Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities study in 1996 forecasted that rail cargo lines that serve La Crosse County will continue to serve as higher density lines.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(9)(d)4.

4. Air Cargo.

a. The La Crosse Municipal Airport serves as an air cargo facility. The airport is not one of the state's six primary air cargo airports, but it does function as a feeder air service. Rather than maintain and operate a fleet of small aircraft, the integrated express carriers contract for on-demand service with a variety of aircraft operators.

b. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020 forecasts for all-cargo aircraft operations at La Crosse Municipal Airport to continue to grow. In 2020, state forecasts predict that the La Crosse Municipal Airport will have the second highest aircraft operations by commercial air cargo carriers, second to General Mitchell International in Milwaukee, but that the La Crosse Municipal Airport's share of the state's air cargo operations will be less than 12 percent.









Map 9.3

**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2006



Source: La Crosse County Png. Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

(e) Movement of People – Intercity.

1. Highways.

a. Interstate 90 serves long distance, intercity trips to Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota and areas west, and areas to the east including Madison and Chicago, Illinois. USH 14 and 53, STH 35 and 16 provide north-south travel parallel to the Mississippi River.

b. The Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020 projects extreme or severe traffic congestion on state routes in the cities of La Crosse and Onalaska. State traffic models predict little to no congestion on Interstate 90 within the County. According to the 2030 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan STH 16 between STH 157 and La Crosse St, some segments of USH 53, STH 35, 4<sup>th</sup> St., and La Crosse St. all have a congestion level that is above the State DOT threshold. The Plan also forecasts deficiencies on the following routes: segments of USH 53, USH 14/61, STH35, and STH 16 and all of Copeland Ave and Rose St; George St north of Clinton St; La Crosse St; and parts of Main St in Onalaska, 4th St, Cass St and Mormon Coulee Rd.

c. See the Road Network by Type and Road Network by Jurisdiction Maps for a depiction of the highway and roadway system in La Crosse County. The roadways designated as state routes and the interstate are used for intercity travel.

2. Air Transportation.

a. The La Crosse Municipal Airport is one of nine Wisconsin airports that have commercial air passenger service on a year-round basis. The airport is located on French Island and it serves passenger air travel through connections to regional hubs. American Eagle serves the airport with three flights per day every day of the week, connecting through Chicago. Northwest Airlines has eight flights per day, connecting through Minneapolis. Skyway Airlines, with service to Milwaukee and a connection to Midwest Airlines ended its service on October 31, 2005.

b. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020 forecasts an increasing number of enplanements. The plan forecasts 201,000 thousand enplanements in 2010 and 231,000 enplanements in 2020.

c. At the airport, the multimodal connection opportunities are to rent a vehicle from three national car rental companies (Avis, Hertz and National), or to use local city bus Route 4 (French Island/Industrial Parks).

3. Passenger Rail

a. Intercity passenger rail is available through Amtrak service. The Amtrak Empire Builder serves La Crosse, with regional connection to Chicago, Milwaukee, Columbus, Portage, Wisconsin Dells, Tomah, Winona, Red Wing, and St. Paul. The Empire Builder also connects to the West Coast (Seattle, WA and Portland, OR). Through a connection in Chicago, the national Amtrak network is available.

b. The passenger rail station is located at St. Andrew and Caledonia Streets (601 St. Andrew Street in the City of La Crosse). The closest multimodal connection opportunities are public bus Route 2 (Northside/33rd Street) and intercity bus. The intercity bus company may relocate to the new MTU transit center slated to be built in 2006 at 3rd Street and Jay Street in Downtown La Crosse.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(9)(e)3.c.

c. WisDOT has been studying ways in which Wisconsin's intercity passenger rail system could be expanded and developed into a more robust component of the state's overall transportation system. WisDOT, along with Amtrak and eight other Midwestern state DOTs, is currently evaluating the Midwest Regional Rail System, a proposed 3,000-mile, Chicago-based passenger rail network in the Midwest. The regional rail system would provide 6 round trips at peak times between Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, La Crosse, and St. Paul. Modern trains operating at peak speeds of up to 110-mph could produce travel times competitive with driving or flying.

4. Intercity Bus

a. Intercity passenger bus service in the La Crosse area was provided by Greyhound Lines; however, in August 2004, Greyhound discontinued service to the La Crosse area as part of its route restructuring. Intercity bus transportation is now provided by Jefferson Lines, a connecting carrier to Greyhound Bus Lines. Jefferson Lines runs daily scheduled bus service that connects to Greyhound's national service in Madison and Minneapolis/St. Paul.

b. The intercity bus terminal is located at 601 St. Andrew Street in the City of La Crosse. The closest multimodal connection opportunities are public bus Route 2 Northside/33rd Street and Amtrak passenger rail. Jefferson Lines may relocate to the new MTU transit center slated to be built in 2006 at 3rd Street and Jay Street in Downtown La Crosse.

(f) Movement of People – Intracity. There are a variety of modes that provide transportation within La Crosse County.

1. Local Roadway Network. The street network shapes access and circulation through the County. Public streets in the area are classified by their primary function, as described below:

Principal Arterials – Serve longer intra-urban trips and traffic traveling through urban areas. They carry high traffic volumes and provide links to major activity centers.

Minor Arterials – Provide intra-community continuity and service to trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials. The minor arterial system interconnects with the urban arterial system and provides system connections to the rural collectors.

Collectors – Provide both land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. These facilities collect traffic from local streets in residential neighborhoods and channel it onto the arterial system. In the central business district, and in other areas of like development and traffic density, the collector system may include the street grid which forms the basic unit of traffic circulation.

Local Streets – Local streets primarily provide direct access to adjacent land and access to higher order systems. Local streets offer the lowest level of mobility and through traffic movement on this system is usually discouraged.

**Table 9.1: Length of Highways by Jurisdiction**

Jurisdiction (1)	Length In Miles	Percent of Total
Interstate Highways	40	3.5
U.S. Highways	27	2.4
State Highways	109	9.6
County Highways	288	25.4
Town Roads	367	32.3
City Streets	256	22.5
Village Streets	49	4.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,136</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Mileage of county highways that also serve as local streets in cities and villages are assigned as state and county mileage, not mileage on city and village streets.

Source - La Crosse County Development Plan 2020

a. Average Daily Traffic

i. One method to understand the usage patterns on a community’s street network is through counting the daily traffic of each roadway segment present on an average day. These counts are one characteristic that can be used to describe the function of a road and to observe change in usage over time.

ii. The 2030 La Crosse and La Crescent Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee estimated level of service for roadways, which establishes a threshold for “acceptable” congestion levels by facility type. There are small segments on the state highways that will experience some congestion, but the most problematic may be the congestion on all three crossings over the La Crosse River – USH 53, STH 35, and STH 16. Congestion on these routes will further divide the City of La Crosse. The portions of the following areas are identified in the plan as locations for future congestion under current conditions:

- Copeland Avenue & Rose Street (US Highway 53)
- 3rd Street & 4th Street (US Highway 53)
- South Avenue / Mormon Coulee Road (US Highway 14/61)
- George Street / Lang Drive / State Highway 35
- State Highway 16
- Cass Street
- La Crosse Street
- Main Street in Onalaska

b. Crashes. For the 2030 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee mapped the locations that have high crash occurrences. As one might expect, high volume intersections experience more crashes. One of the main concerns of high traffic volumes and their effects on congestion is the increased risk of motor vehicle crashes. The intersection of State Road 16 and State Road 157 had the most reported crashes with 26; the intersection of State Road 157 and I-90 ramp had the next highest with 24.

c. Pavement Conditions. The effectiveness of local roadways is dependent on adequate maintenance of their surface condition. The Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) system was developed by the Wisconsin Transportation Information Center to assist local communities in evaluating the condition of the roadway system and to help set priorities for maintenance, reconditioning, and reconstruction. The PASER system is a database of visual inspections, keyed to standardized ratings.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(9)(f)1.d.

d. Bridges. Given the County's location at a confluence of the Mississippi River and several of its tributaries, bridges are relatively more important to La Crosse County than other Wisconsin counties. Recent projects on Mississippi River bridges and projected congestion on the La Crosse River bridges underscore their importance. The Cass Street bridge project was recently completed, and the WisDOT 2007-2009 Local Bridge Program Approved Projects List includes the design and construction of the CTH C – Linse Avenue Bridge.

e. Rustic Roads. While the County's transportation system supports all economic activity, some roadways in La Crosse County have been designated to promote tourism and related economic activity. These Rustic Roads are scenic, lightly traveled country roads that have outstanding natural features along its borders such as rugged terrain, native vegetation, native wildlife, or include open areas with agricultural vistas that singly or in combination uniquely set this road apart from other roads. La Crosse County has three designated Rustic Roads.

i. Rustic Road 26: County MM, beginning at the intersection of USH 14/61 to its intersection with USH 14 and USH 61 (5.3 miles). La Crosse County MM combines beautiful scenery and history. It offers the traveler views of the Mississippi River Valley and the Mormon Coulee Creek Valley. Brinkman's Ridge provides a wide panorama of the Mississippi River, including the Goose Island wildlife refuge. This route also passes by the Oehler Mill site, first built in 1854, and a 111-year old root cellar.

ii. Rustic Road 31: R31 travels on several streets in the Village of West Salem to County Highway C, north to WIS 16, then loops around Swarthout Lakeside Park, back to WIS 16 (2.6 miles). Rustic Road travelers can view such historic spots as the Gullickson Octagon House, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, and the Hamlin Garland Homestead, where the late Pulitzer prize-winning author, who was born near West Salem, did much of his writing. Other points of interest include the former home of Thomas Leonard, founder of West Salem, and Swarthout Lakeside Park, a recreation area near Lake Neshonoc.

iii. Rustic Road 64: Northwest of Holmen, R64 makes a loop off US 53/STH 93, following Amsterdam Prairie Road and Old 93 (2.7 miles). Located near the Van Loon Wildlife Area, this route offers a rather unique combination of historic transportation architecture and scenic views. From Amsterdam Prairie Road, it is possible to enter historic McGilvray Road, also known as 7-Bridges Road, by foot. McGilvray Road is on the National Register of Historic Places because of its rare bowstring arch bridge construction.

2. Public Transportation and Transit. The La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility (MTU), operated by the City of La Crosse, provides the only standard mass transit service in the County. Six bus routes serve virtually the entire City with a connection to the City of La Crescent. Four of the routes serve the City of La Crosse, one serves the Onalaska/La Crosse Shopping District, and one serves La Crescent.

- Route 1 Valley View Mall / Southside: Serves 33rd Street and Mormon Coulee Road on the south to the Onalaska Campus of the Gunderson Clinic on the north, serving the east edge of Downtown La Crosse and the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse.

- Route 2 Northside / 33rd Street: Serves Shelby Mall on the south and the intersection of Taylor and Hamilton to the north, serving the west edge of Downtown La Crosse, this route also services the Gunderson Lutheran Clinic.

- Route 3 Green Bay / State Road: Serves the central portion of Downtown La Crosse, Central High School, and Franciscan Skemp Campus, with connections to Routes 1, 2, and 5 at the Transfer Center.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(9)(f)2.

- Route 4 French Island / Industrial Parks: Serves the airport to the west and Crossing Meadows to the east.
- Route 5 La Crescent Apple Express: Serves La Crescent with connections to Routes 1, 2, and 3 at the Transfer Center.
- Route 6 Onalaska Shopper Shuttle: This circulator connects Crossing Meadows on the west to the Woodman's Supermarket on STH 16 to the east.

Most of the routes in La Crosse operate on 30 minute headways between approximately 5 AM and 10 PM on weekdays, and hourly service and somewhat reduced hours on weekends. Route 4 (French Island/Industrial Parks) and Route 5 (La Crescent Apple Express) is "demand responsive-route deviation," meaning a person wishing to board a bus may call the dispatcher in advance and a bus will deviate a short distance from its regular route onto another street. A person on a bus on these routes may ask the driver to deviate from the route in the same manner. Routes 4 and 5 only operate Monday through Friday. Multimodal opportunities include the ability for MTU buses to carry bikes through its "Bikes on Busses" service wherein bicyclists may place their vehicles on the front of the bus.

The Onalaska/Holmen Public Transit Taxi Program is a demand response door-to-door transportation system. The shared ride taxi service provides transportation to all citizens and meets Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements. The program is administered by the Onalaska City Council, and it contracts with a private transit company to provide the service. Service hours are 6:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., seven days a week. In addition to fares, funding for the service comes from a combination of federal, state, and local dollars.

There is currently one Park and Ride Lots in WisDOT's District 5, which includes La Crosse County. The Park and Ride Lot is located at Valley View Mall. See the 2030 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan for a detailed description of MTU's service, as well as private transit providers.

a. Paratransit.

i. Paratransit, in its broadest sense, includes all modes of "public" or "mass" passenger transportation systems other than privately driven automobiles or regularly scheduled bus/train service. To meet the special needs of persons with disabilities and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, MTU operates lift-equipped buses on its regular fixed route system.

ii. MTU also provides complementary Paratransit Service. Disabled persons who, by reason of their disability cannot get to a bus stop from their home, from the bus stop to their destination, or who require more assistance in using transit service than that provided by a driver operating a lift-equipped MTU bus, may qualify for ADA Paratransit Service. This service operates on a "demand response" basis with advance reservations made the day before transportation is needed. MTU contracts with a private provider to operate this service, which is available during the same hours and days as buses are scheduled.

iii. La Crosse County Department of Aging contracts with a private operator to provide "mini-bus" service to all residents of La Crosse County age 60 or over, or 18 and over who are self-defined disabled, or otherwise unable to use conventional mass transit if it is available. In the Cities of La Crosse and Onalaska this service is provided on a daily basis but in other parts of the County it is available certain days of the week on a demand response door-to-door, with a hierarchy of trip purposes determining the priority for space and time.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(9)(f)2.b.

b. Taxis. There are three taxi cab companies operating in La Crosse County that will provide chauffeured taxi service from or to anywhere in the County, or to or from other destinations, with a La Crosse County starting or ending point, at market rates.

3. Biking

a. The La Crosse area has an extensive system of both on-road bicycle and off-road multipurpose facilities, especially in the more urbanized areas. The 2030 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan describes in detail each of the off-road and on-road bicycling facilities.

b. On-road bicycle routes include both intracity and intercity routes, with intercity routes achieving state and national significance. On-road intracity routes tend to align with minor arterial streets in order to take advantage of signalization and connectivity. Greater directness could be achieved by following major arterials; however, those alignments are more heavily trafficked and pose a greater danger to bicyclists.

c. Off-road multipurpose facilities have both local and state significance and take advantage of abandoned railroad alignments and scenic marsh views. Most of the off-road facilities with local significance circulate within the City of La Crosse. The Town of Holland recently completed a new off-road facility, the Holland Bluff Trail. One new off-road facility in the northern portion of the planning area is currently in planning stages in the Village of Holmen.

d. See Chapter 5 of the 2030 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan for a description of the following facilities, as well as a list of locations with high numbers of bicycle crashes:

- i. Great River State Trail
- ii. La Crosse River State Trail
- iii. 3 Rivers Trail
- iv. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street Trail
- v. Rabbit Trail
- vi. STH 16 Sidepath
- vii. Crossing Meadows Trail
- viii. Northern Hills Trail
- ix. Green Coulee Rd Trail
- x. Holland Bluff Trail
- xi. Halfway Creek Trail
- xii. West Salem Veterans Park Trail
- xiii. Veterans Park Connector Trail

4. Walking.

a. Pedestrian facilities are not mapped by most local governments in La Crosse County. However, the 2030 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan makes the following generalizations about the pedestrian network:

i. For the most part, the roadways in suburban and urban-fringe areas of the planning area are constructed with curb and gutter; yet, these roads generally lack sidewalks, and have a narrow, 3-ft gutter pan and/or a wide curb lane within which a pedestrian might travel (not recommended). The lack of sidewalks forces pedestrians to walk in the roadway, increasing the likelihood of pedestrian/motor vehicle crashes.

ii. The cities and villages (incorporated areas) have relatively complete systems within and near their cores (central business districts); however they are often in disrepair.

iii. The cities and villages have gaps in the sidewalk system or lack sidewalks entirely in their fringe areas. This is due mainly to the incorporated areas annexing unincorporated areas that were not under development requirements to provide sidewalks.

b. Issues of pedestrian safety and childhood obesity prompted the City of Onalaska, Coulee Region Childhood Obesity Coalition, and Irving Pertzsch Elementary School to team up to study and implement a Safe Routes to School Program. The first phase of this study began with a survey of parents whose children attend Irving Pertzsch Elementary School. Results of the survey revealed that, while only 22 percent of the students whose parents responded lived farther than one-half mile from the school, 58 percent of the children were driven to school every day. Parents cited safety and dropping their children off on their way to work as two major reasons for driving their children to school. See the 2030 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan for more detailed information on pedestrian crashes, particularly for children in the vicinity of schools.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(9)(g)

(g) Planned and Scheduled Improvements. Below is a brief description of major, multi-year projects. For full details on funding and phasing, the reader should contact the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

1. I-90 Corridor Roadside Facilities Study.

a. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has initiated a study to evaluate roadside facilities along the I-90 corridor from La Crosse to Tomah. The purpose of the study is to develop a long-range plan for modern roadside facilities along the I-90 corridor that serve the traveling public, enhance freeway operations and safety, and are compatible with local land use planning.

b. The study will evaluate options for improving facilities at their present location and/or developing facilities at new locations. Four existing roadside facilities along the I-90 corridor will be evaluated:

i. La Crosse travel information center, located on French Island, mile marker 1 eastbound.

ii. West Salem safety and weight enforcement facility (truck weigh station), located at mile marker 10 eastbound.

iii. Rest area #15, located at mile marker 20 eastbound, east of Bangor.

iv. Rest area #16, located at mile marker 21 westbound, west of Sparta.

2. South La Crosse Transportation Study.

a. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, City of La Crosse, and Town of Shelby, is working to identify a long-term vision for the future of South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road.

b. The area under evaluation includes South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road from the junction with Green Bay Street (by Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center) to the intersection of USH 14/61/STH 35. Two additional highway segments also will be examined:

i. STH 35 from the USH 14/61/STH 35 intersection to the La Crosse County line (near Goose Island).

ii. USH 14/61 from the USH 14/61/STH 35 intersection to the junction with County M (near Ten Mile Hill).

c. Timing for potential four-lane construction on the rural segments will be examined using updated traffic counts and forecasts.

3. 12th Ave Extended/USH 53 Extended. According to the 2030 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan, the following recommendation has been adapted by the LAPC to extend this roadway:

"USH 53 Extended from CTH SS to Gillette St and 12th Avenue Extended from CTH SS to STH 16. These two projects are the recommended "minimal build" of the New North/South Roadway. The New Roadway will be considered with reduced lane capacity if warranted by the reinforcement and reconstruction of the existing north/south grid network, such as the continuation of Oak Ave and 12th Ave and the distribution of other improvements on existing roadways."

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(9)(g)4.

4. Sources: La Crosse County Development Plan 2020; 2030 La Crosse and La Crescent Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan; Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020 for WisDOT District 5; Port of La Crosse Harbor Plan; and Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020.

(10) Utilities and Community Facilities.

(a) Overview. Utilities and community facilities provide the foundation on which La Crosse County is built and maintained and also provide the basis for how the County functions. Utilities include sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water systems, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, and solid waste disposal systems, including recycling. Community facilities include schools, libraries, parks, police, fire, health care, churches, and other similar facilities. Utilities and community facilities contribute significantly to the quality of life in La Crosse County and it is important to assess the existing services and understand how and if they need to be changed or improved.

(b) Water Supply.

1. Approximately 75 percent of La Crosse County’s residents are served through the nine municipal water supply systems and 36 active wells that exist in La Crosse County. These facilities are depicted on the Utilities Map and are listed in Table 10.1. The County’s water supply comes entirely from groundwater – either through municipal wells or private wells. The water supply in the County, as well as most of Wisconsin, is truly an invaluable treasure because of its cool, clean, and clear characteristics. The vast majority of Southwestern Wisconsin’s groundwater comes from a sandstone and dolomite aquifer that was deposited 425-600 million years ago. The area’s mid-continent climate ensures an abundant supply of groundwater by providing over 30 inches a year of precipitation. This groundwater recharge capability allows the area’s population a plentiful supply of safe water.

**Table 10.1: La Crosse County Municipal Water Supply, 2005**

Name	City	Storage Capacity
BANGOR WATERWORKS	BANGOR	176,000
HOLMEN WATERWORKS	HOLMEN	600,000
LA CROSSE WATERWORKS	LA CROSSE	5,000,000
MINDORO SANITARY DISTRICT 1	MINDORO	50,000
ONALASKA WATERWORKS	ONALASKA	
ROCKLAND WATERWORKS	ROCKLAND	50,000
SHELBY TN OF SD 2 ARBOR HL	LA CROSSE	65,000
SHELBY TN OF SD 2 SKYLINE	LA CROSSE	45,000
SHELBY TN OF WEDGEWOOD VLY	LA CROSSE	152,000
ST JOSEPH SAN DIST 1	LA CROSSE	161,500
WEST SALEM WATERWORKS	WEST SALEM	750,000

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 2005

2. While the County’s precipitation and soil geology allow for rapid groundwater recharge, they also allow for groundwater contamination from surface activities. There are many contaminated groundwater sites within the County and with continued growth in population and economic activity, the demand on groundwater supplies will continue to increase. To assist in preventing further groundwater contamination, a groundwater modeling study of La Crosse County was completed in 2003. This study assessed the effects of recent and potential future groundwater withdrawals and provides a suitable tool to evaluate the effects of proposed water management programs. The plan identifies the extent of contamination on existing sites and the direction in which these contaminated sites are flowing.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(10)(b)3.

3. It is important to designate groundwater protection zones, often called groundwater recharge areas or wellhead protection areas, to protect this invaluable resource. Wellhead protection plans and ordinances are already in place in the City of Onalaska, and the Villages of Holmen, Rockland, and West Salem. Any new municipal wells that are drilled in La Crosse County are also required to have wellhead protection plans and ordinances.

(c) Sanitary Sewer Service/Wastewater Treatment Facilities.

1. There is probably no other man-made facility that plays such an influential role in determining the location and density of development than sewer service supported by a centralized wastewater treatment plant. Wastewater treatment plants are cost beneficial because of an economy of scale factor involving a large population contributing to and maintaining one single facility as opposed to each user maintaining their own treatment facility or holding tank. The economic benefits of wastewater treatment systems carry over into land subdivision developments too, making undeveloped land within a community or on its periphery attractive for development because of the increased number of smaller size lots that can be served in an environmentally sound manner. The higher costs associated with a centralized wastewater treatment collection system requires a high number and a certain density of users; therefore these systems are most often found in urbanizing areas.

2. Four sewer service areas are located throughout the county: La Crosse, Holmen, St. Joseph, and Mindoro.

3. The City of La Crosse owns and operates the La Crosse municipal wastewater treatment system that serves a combined population of approximately 80,000 residents in La Crosse County, with a total of 11 municipal wastewater treatment facilities. The City of Onalaska, Town of Shelby, and Town of Campbell through local ordinances and intermunicipal agreements with the City of La Crosse discharge to this treatment system. The facility is located on Isle La Plume in the City of La Crosse and was originally constructed in 1936, but has been modified and upgraded many times, with the last major upgrade occurring in 1998. The La Crosse Sewer Service Area Water Quality Management Plan 1999-2020 states that the facility has excess capacity that can handle twice the loading and the population that was served in 1999. Each of the Villages in the County has their own wastewater treatment facility. These facilities are depicted on the Utilities Map.

4. A general rule of thumb that is often used when estimating present or future wastewater treatment demand is 100 gallons per capita per day. A community with no major industrial or institutional users, such as the Mindoro Sanitary District treatment plant, operate with a flow that is much lower, while the City of La Crosse treatment plant, which has major industrial and institutional users, handles flow amounts that exceed the 100 gallons per capita per day by three to four times. Wastewater treatment plants are also intentionally built with excess capacity to handle future residential and business growth.

5. Section 208 of the Clean Water Act plays an important role in the La Crosse sewer service area, and this section of law led to the development of the La Crosse Sewer Service Area Plan in 1985; the plan was updated in 1999. Approvals for wastewater treatment facilities, permits for all point source discharges and sewer extensions, and any projects funded with Wisconsin Fund dollars must conform to the plan.

6. The plan also delineates a 20-year sewer service area boundary, which is the maximum land area that is expected to be served by sanitary sewer service. Environmentally sensitive areas that should be protected from development or mitigated against development impacts are also identified in this plan. These environmentally sensitive areas include (1) steep slopes (greater than 20 percent), (2) wetlands, and (3) floodplains.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(10)(c)7.

7. A very important element of the Sewer Service Area Plan from a local government perspective is a policy that a single regional treatment plant is the lowest-cost approach to wastewater treatment in the area. The costs of one or more smaller, satellite plants in the developing areas of towns were analyzed and found to be much higher than the cost of a single regional facility. This policy is based on a recommendation from the Facility plan for Wastewater Treatment System - La Crosse (1979) and is consistent with the Department of Natural Resources nonproliferation policy. Special conditions are also identified in the Plan describing the circumstances that need to be present to be granted an exception to this nonproliferation policy. The Sewer Service Area boundary includes areas within the towns of Medary, Onalaska, Campbell, Hamilton, and Shelby and the entire cities of La Crosse and Onalaska. The Sewer Service Area Plan also outlines the procedure for review of sewer extension requests and for amendments to the Plan.

(d) On-Site Wastewater Treatment Technology.

1. The disposal of wastewater in the areas of La Crosse County that are not served by sanitary sewer is handled through the use of individual on-site wastewater treatment systems, often referred to as septic systems. On-site wastewater treatment systems are used by fewer than 20 percent of residents in the County. These systems include on-site ground absorption septic systems, holding tanks, and private package system plants that serve larger commercial industrial uses or higher density residential developments such as condominiums and mobile home courts.

2. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce (COMM) regulates the siting, design, installation and inspection of most private on-site sewage systems. The State's Plumbing Code (COMM 83) allows both conventional and advanced pre-treatment systems for residential development, which presents local communities with land use challenges. Recent changes to COMM 83 allow properties that have soil depths or soil types that were once unsuitable for conventional septic systems to now be developed and serviced by advanced pre-treatment sewage systems. This could result in widespread areas of scattered non-farm related residential development in the County unless sound land use planning principles and policies are followed. Scattered non-farm residential development is both costly and inefficient to serve and it significantly degrades the County's unique rural character. Further, such scattered non-farm development often leads to increased conflicts between agricultural operations and non-agricultural uses.

3. If not properly located or maintained, on-site sewage disposal systems can significantly pollute groundwater. During this 20 year planning horizon, the County anticipates private on-site sewage treatment will continue. However, some areas of the County that are within or adjacent to the sewer service area may connect to sewer service.

(e) Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facilities.

1. Solid waste in La Crosse County is disposed of at the La Crosse County Landfill, which is located east of I-90 and south of Highway 16 as shown on the Utilities Map. Glass, aluminum, and tin are collected for recycling at this facility. In addition to landfilling solid waste, the County is under contract with Xcel Energy (formerly Northern States Power Company) until 2008 to provide sufficient quantities of solid waste to economically run Xcel's refuse to energy facility located on French Island in the City of La Crosse. In 1988 La Crosse County and Xcel Energy entered into a contract calling for the burning of solid waste to produce energy and extending the life and use of the County's regional landfill. The contract calls for a minimum delivery of 73,000 tons of acceptable solid waste a year. All unacceptable solid waste and the ash left over from the burning is disposed of at the County landfill. The need to provide this minimum quantity of solid waste and the closing of many smaller landfills in Western Wisconsin resulted in La Crosse County negotiating solid waste disposal contracts with other surrounding communities and counties. At the time of this writing, solid waste is received for burning at the Xcel facility and landfilled in La Crosse County from as far as 100 miles away and comes from communities in both Minnesota and Wisconsin.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(10)(e)2.

2. The County recently entered into a contract to mine an estimated 2 million cubic yards of waste that was buried in the landfill in the 1970s and 1980s and rebury it in a new section designed to better prevent groundwater contamination. The old landfill has been leaking contaminants into the groundwater for years and the plume of contaminants threatened the wells of residents to the south.

3. This is the biggest project of its kind in Wisconsin, and should be completed by 2008. The project could extend the life of the landfill by up to 40 years, which is well beyond the planning horizon of this Comprehensive Plan. The expansion is much needed, as it is estimated that 200 to 300 tons per day of waste enter the landfill. The continued population growth in La Crosse County coupled with the rugged driftless area topography makes the siting of a new sanitary landfill in the County difficult. Therefore, extending the life of the existing landfill is extremely important.

(f) Stormwater Management.

1. Stormwater management has gained attention in recent years as an environmental concern because of its impacts on flooding, property damage, and surface water quality issues. Similar to water supply and wastewater treatment, stormwater management is an important part of municipal infrastructure. In La Crosse County, individual municipalities are responsible for collecting, storing, and conveying rainfall and snowmelt runoff in a manner that is safe for the public and does not harm the environment.

2. In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requires an erosion control plan and permit for all projects that disturb one or more acres of land. The landowner is required to ensure that a site specific erosion control plan and stormwater management plan are developed and implemented at the construction site. Also, the La Crosse County Subdivision and Platting Ordinance requires subdividers to provide a soil erosion plan subject to Chapter 21 of the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances and a stormwater management plan that meets the appropriate post-construction water quality requirements of NR151 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and the water quantity requirements set forth in the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances.

(g) Telecommunication Facilities.

1. CenturyTel provides the County with local telephone service; long distance service is available through several providers. Charter Communications provides cable television service and both CenturyTel and Charter Communications offer high-speed Internet access.

2. The La Crosse area has a strong base of broadband technology. High speed Internet access and fiber optic connections are available throughout the La Crosse Metro area. The region is connected to the Midwestern fiber optic network via CenturyTel. Fiber optics allow for the high-quality transmission of large volumes of information at an affordable rate. However, this technology is not available throughout the entire County and residents in rural areas and outside of the La Crosse Metro area have limited capabilities for high-speed Internet services.

(h) Power Plants, Electricity, and Transmission Lines.

1. La Crosse County is served by two electric power utilities, Xcel Energy and Riverland Energy Cooperative. The nearest power plants are located on French Island in La Crosse and in Genoa. Xcel Energy and We Energies provide natural gas to County residents.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(10)(h)2.

2. The French Island facility is a combination generating plant and resource recovery facility. The plant burns wood waste and processed municipal solid waste, called refuse-derived fuel (RDF) - a burnable fuel produced on-site at a resource recovery facility built specifically for that purpose. The conversion of the French Island facility in the 1980s from burning coal and oil, to burning wood waste and RDF helped extend the life of the plant and maintain reasonable electric rates for customers, while resolving a solid waste disposal problem for La Crosse County. The facility has the capacity to burn 104,000 tons of waste per year.

3. One of the drawbacks to burning garbage is the impact on air emissions. The refuse to energy facility must meet federal emission guidelines and meeting these standards is of critical importance due to the facility location in the City of La Crosse. In November 2002, French Island completed \$10.9 million in improvements to reduce emissions, and has operated at 85-90 percent below previous emission levels since the improvements were made.

4. Transmission lines connect the French Island power plant to the surrounding region. In October 2005 it was announced that a 345-kilovolt power line was proposed to run from eastern Minnesota to northern La Crosse County by 2011, and eventually extend into central Wisconsin. Utilities report that existing transmission lines are inadequate and that a new high-voltage line is needed. At the time of this writing, the largest high-voltage lines in the Coulee Region carry 161-kilovolts and utilities report that these lines aren't adequate to move power through the area or handle new generation sources.

5. Overall, according to Wisconsin's Citizen Utility Board, the electrical system in western Wisconsin is congested and not as robust as in other parts of the state. As the area considers energy needs over this planning horizon, it will be important to coordinate their transmission planning with Minnesota and also to consider opportunities for utilizing alternative energy sources, such as wind and solar.

# Public Utilities





Map 10.1

**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2005



Source: ESRI Data & Maps CD  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(10)(i)

(i) Libraries.

1. The La Crosse Public library serves residents throughout the County. A main branch is located in the City of La Crosse and five other branches are located throughout the County. Each branch is housed in a building provided, furnished, and maintained by the municipality in which it is located. The County is responsible for books and other media contained in each library, the processing of the materials, and the personnel to provide the services.

a. The Administrative Center for the County Library is housed in the Holmen Library. 1,500 square feet provides office space and all new books and other media are received and processed in this location before they are sent out to the branches ready for public use.

b. The John Bosshard Memorial Library in Bangor was built in 1991 to replace a smaller location in the Village Hall. The present building has 2,400 square feet of space.

c. The Campbell Branch Library is located in the Campbell Town Hall, which is on French Island. In 1975 the Library was moved into the Town Hall and has been enlarged to its present size of 810 square feet.

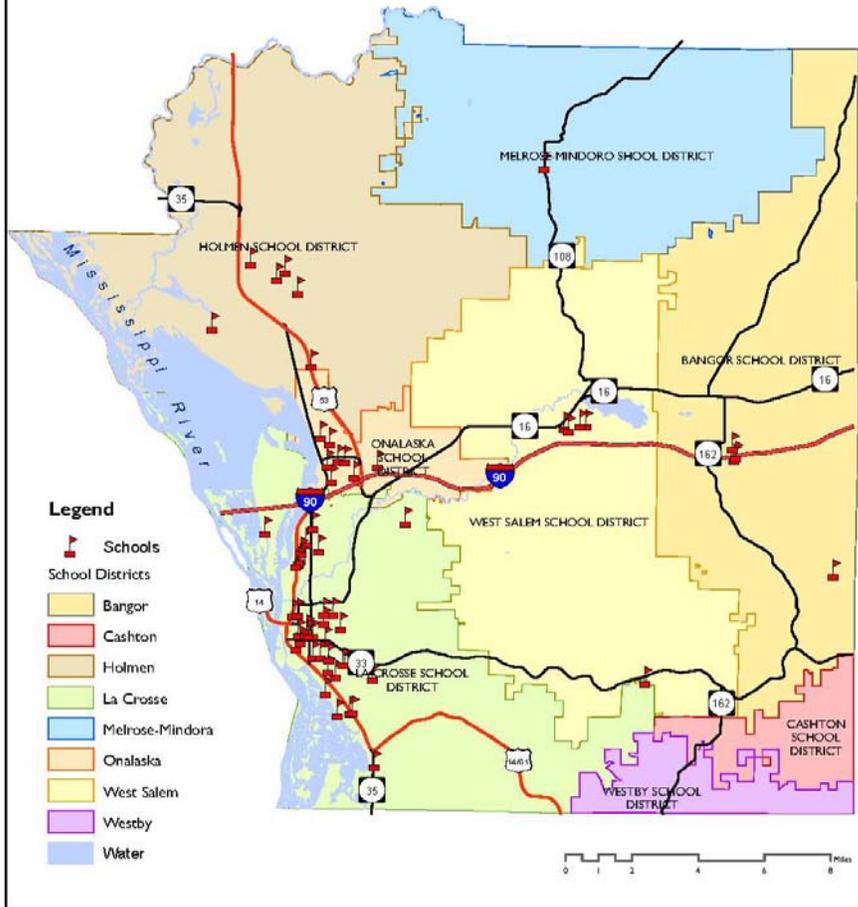
d. The Holmen Area Library is housed in a former grocery store in downtown Holmen. This 4,500 square foot building was renovated in 1988 to accommodate the Library, which was moved from its former location in the Village Hall.

e. The Onalaska Public Library was constructed in 1990 and has 12,000 square feet.

f. The Village of West Salem has the newest facility in the County System, the Hazel Brown Leicht Memorial Library. Dedicated in December 2000, it has 7,500 square feet of space.

2. In addition to the extensive resource collection within the library system, each branch has one or more public computers with Internet access.

### Schools Districts and Schools





Map 10.2

**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2009



Source: ESRI Data & Maps CD  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

(j) Schools.

1. La Crosse County is served by eight school districts: Bangor, Cashton, Holmen, La Crosse, Melrose-Mindoro, Onalaska, West Salem, and Westby. These districts and school locations are shown on the School Districts and Schools Map.

2. The educational future of La Crosse County is ensured through ten public high schools (including charter/alternative schools and the Western Wisconsin Technical College), nine public middle schools (including charter/alternative schools) and twenty-seven elementary schools. In addition, the County has 16 private schools that provide additional educational choices for residents.

3. The County also has several post-secondary education schools, including the following:

a. University of Wisconsin-La Crosse was founded in 1909 and is now one of the 13 four-year campuses in the University of Wisconsin System with enrollment around 9,000 students. UW-L has joined the City's other two institutions of higher education and the region's medical facilities to form a consortium to bring cutting-edge health care to the region, along with a state-of-the-art health research and education facility for professionals and students.

b. Western Wisconsin Technical College is a public two-year college with a focus on technical education. The college has an annual enrollment of approximately 9,400 credit students and 12,900 non-credit students. The average age of WWTC's credit and non-credit student is 33.

c. Established in 1890, Viterbo University is a co-educational Catholic University founded in the Franciscan tradition. Viterbo offers undergraduate and graduate degrees and has an enrollment of approximately 2,100 students.

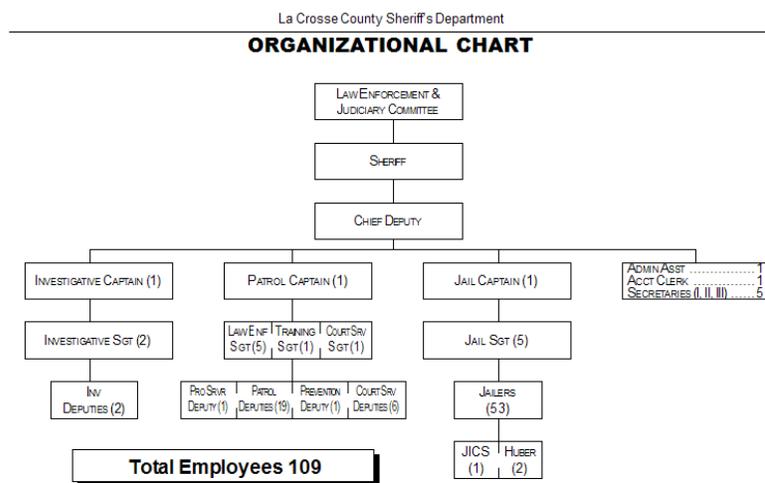
(k) Parks and Recreation Facilities.

La Crosse County has an excellent network of park and recreation facilities. In addition, thousands of acres of quality recreational lands for hunting, fishing, camping, cross country skiing, and snowmobiling exist in the surrounding area. The County's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan provides a detailed description of the park system. Also, the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources section of this Report provides a summary of the County's recreation opportunities.

(I) Police, Fire, and Rescue.

1. The La Crosse County Sheriff's Department is located in the City of La Crosse and serves the entire County. At the time of this writing, the Department has 109 employees. As depicted in Figure 10.1.

Figure 10.1: La Crosse County Sheriff's Department Organizational Chart



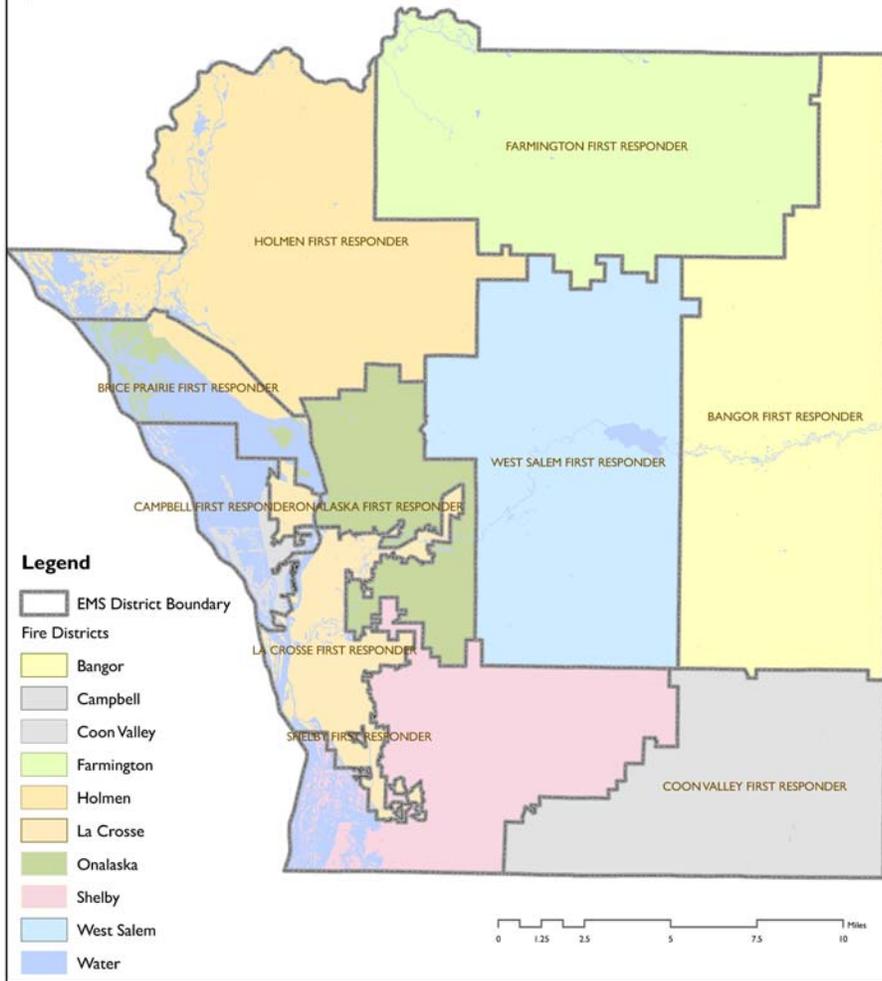
Source: La Crosse County Sheriff's Department

2. There are nine Fire Districts in La Crosse County: Bangor, Campbell, Coon Valley, Farmington, Holmen, La Crosse, Onalaska, Shelby, and West Salem. In addition, there are ten EMS Districts: Bangor, Brice Prairie, Campbell, Coon Valley, Farmington, Holmen, La Crosse, Onalaska, Shelby, and West Salem. These districts are depicted on the Fire and EMS District Map.

3. The La Crosse County 911 Emergency Dispatch Center is located in the La Crosse County Law Enforcement Center in La Crosse. Over 30 employees provide 24-hour emergency telephone service to everyone in La Crosse County. Using a state-of-the-art enhanced 911 system (E-911), the 911 telecommunicator is able to send emergency and non-emergency assistance quickly and accurately.

4. In addition to providing emergency telephone answering service, the La Crosse County 911 Emergency Dispatch Center telecommunicators are the radio and multiple computer system operators. This fully integrated system allows the department to provide full emergency and non-emergency service to each of the eight Law Enforcement Departments, the eight Fire Departments, the nine First Responder organizations, Emergency Government, and Search and Rescue throughout the entire County.

## Fire and EMS District





Map 10.3

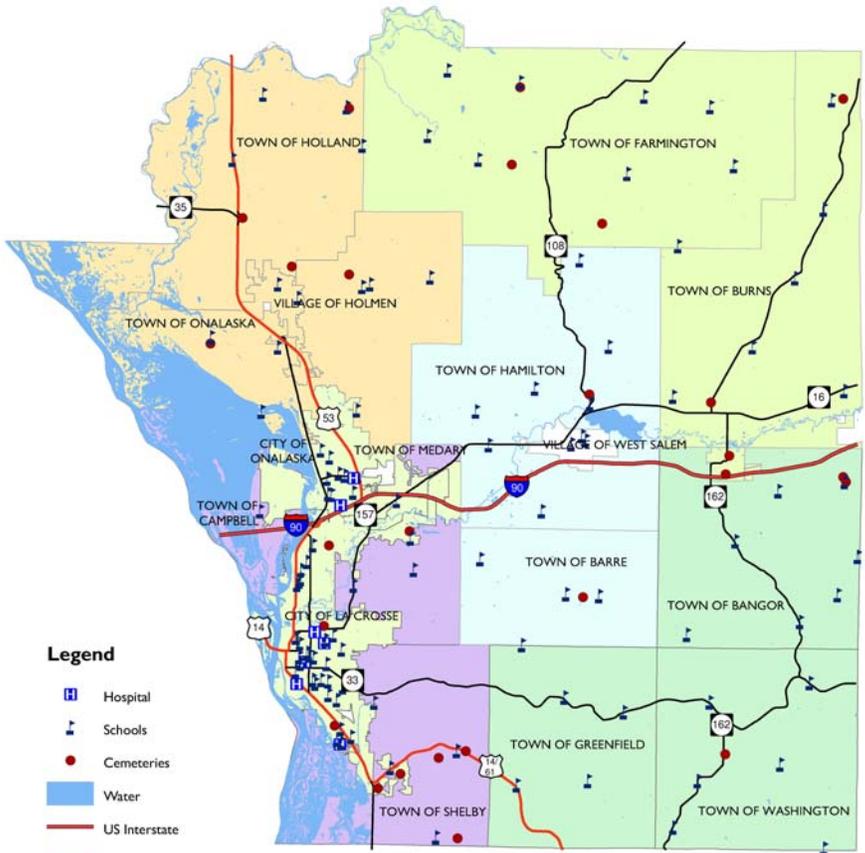
**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2006



Source: ESRI Data & Maps CD  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

## Community Facilities



### Legend

- Hospital
- Schools
- Cemeteries
- Water
- US Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway



Map 10.4

La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan

January 2006



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(10)(m)

(m) Health Care Facilities. La Crosse County is fortunate to have two regional health care centers, Gundersen-Lutheran Medical Center and Franciscan Skemp Healthcare.

1. Gundersen-Lutheran Medical Center is the area's recognized leader in heart, trauma and cancer care, births, business services, research and health education, with over one million clinic, hospital, and emergency room visits each year.

2. Franciscan Skemp Healthcare, partnered with world-renowned Mayo Clinic, offers excellent specialty services including cardiology, neurology, nephrology, oncology, orthopedics and many others, as well as comprehensive, compassionate primary care throughout an 11-county region in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. Franciscan Skemp is a leader in women's health, having established the area's first Women's Health Center in 1983.

(n) Child Care Facilities.

1. Family Resources, the accredited Child Care Resource and Referral service for La Crosse County, helps over 1,000 families locate and select child care each year. According to County statistics, La Crosse County has one of the highest numbers of regulated child care slots per 1,000 children in Wisconsin. Businesses within the County can purchase a personalized parent counseling and child care referral service from Family Resources for their employees as an additional option in their benefits package.

2. La Crosse County has 33 regulated full day group child care centers and 254 regulated full day family child care homes. 212 child care facilities offer infant care and 47 offer care during second and third shift.

(o) Religious Institutions and Cemeteries. Religious institutions of a variety of denominations are located throughout La Crosse County. The County also has numerous public and private cemeteries, including seven in the West Salem area, six in the Mindoro area, six in the Bangor area, seven in the Holmen area, two in the Onalaska area, and three in the La Crosse area. The locations of these cemeteries are generally available in County plat books, as well as from the County's Historical Society. The Internet also provides information on County cemeteries and genealogical records.

(p) Timetable for the Expansion of Utilities and Community Facilities. An important part of this planning process is to determine what upgrades or expansions to the County's utilities and community facilities are needed, and when. This analysis will be completed throughout this planning process and upgrades and expansions will be identified as needed.

(q) Sources:

1. La Crosse County Development Plan 2020
2. La Crosse County Land Conservation Department
3. La Crosse County Land and Water Conservation Plan 1999
4. Numerical Simulation of Ground-Water Flow in La Crosse County, Wisconsin, and into Nearby Pools of the Mississippi River, USGS 2003
5. La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan 1998
6. La Crosse County Website - Various Departments
7. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

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(11) Economic Development.

(a) Overview.

1. Economic development incorporates who is working in the County, what industries they are employed in, the companies or agencies that are employing them, where those companies are located, and the money they are making and contributing to the La Crosse County economy. The chapter provides an overview of the statistical performance of those functions in the County.

2. While unemployment rates have inched up slowly over the past five years, the County is lower than state and national averages. There is an active work force participating in a wide range of industries. The employers in the County provide numerous opportunities for employees both in and outside the County.

(b) Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development.

1. Table 11.1 below provides an initial list of strengths and weaknesses that are currently facing La Crosse County. Past reports, business development plans, and site visits have contributed to this list. Future items will be added to the list as the planning process continues.

Table 11.1: Strengths and Weaknesses of the La Crosse Economy

Strengths	Weaknesses
Regional Center	Lack of Cooperation between Communities
Multiple Transportation Modes	Infrastructure Limitations
Low Unemployment Rate	Isolation from Larger Population Centers (Twin Cities, Milwaukee, Madison)
Great Natural Resource Amenities	Topography and geography of the area
Available Land and Building Space	Per capita income is below the State average
High Quality of Life	Property tax system encourages sprawl
Educated and Diverse Workforce	
Topography and geography of the area	
Higher Education Opportunities	
Health Care and Medical Facilities Options	
Strong, diverse manufacturing base	
Diversity	
Regional economic base separated from Larger Population Centers (Twin Cities, Milwaukee, Madison)	

Source: SAA, 2005

2. Future recommendations will be developed to build off strengths and to mitigate the weaknesses, to the extent possible.

(c) Labor Force.

1. Over 70 percent of the population over 16 years old is involved in the work force. Of those that are active in the labor force only 4 percent are currently without a job. The Towns of Medary and Shelby are experiencing exceptionally strong employment numbers, as almost 98 percent of their residents are employed. The Town of Campbell, is currently facing a 6.7 percent unemployment rate, which is highest in the County.

**Table 11.2: La Crosse County, Employment Status as a Percentage, 2000**

	Population 16 years and over	Civilian labor force	Employed	Unemployment Rate	Armed Forces	Not in labor force
Town of Burns	769	71.5	68.3	4.5	0	28.5
Town of Farmington	1,312	72.4	69	4.7	0.2	27.4
Village of Bangor	1,021	71.9	69.5	3.3	0.2	27.9
Village of Rockland	497	74.2	71.6	3.5	0	25.8
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>3,599</b>	<b>72.3%</b>	<b>69.4%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>27.6%</b>
Town of Bangor	432	72.2	70.1	2.9	0	27.8
Town of Greenfield	1,125	79.4	76.8	3.2	0.2	20.4
Town of Washington	574	63.4	61.3	3.3	0	36.6
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>2,131</b>	<b>73.6%</b>	<b>71.3%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>26.3%</b>
Town of Barre	746	82.6	79.6	3.6	0	17.4
Town of Hamilton	1,751	69.7	67.6	3	0	30.3
Village of West Salem	3,304	75.1	71.8	4.4	0.2	24.7
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>5,801</b>	<b>74.4%</b>	<b>71.6%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>
Town of Holland	2,237	81.3	78.9	3	0	18.7
Town of Onalaska	3,668	79.4	76.7	3.5	0	20.6
Village of Holmen	4,539	78.5	75.9	3.3	0	21.5
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>10,444</b>	<b>79.4%</b>	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>
Town of Campbell	3,638	74.8	69.8	6.7	0	25.2
Town of Medary	1,123	77	75.2	2.3	0.2	22.8
Town of Shelby	3,546	68.1	66.3	2.6	0.1	31.8
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>8,307</b>	<b>72.3%</b>	<b>69.1%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>27.7%</b>
City of La Crosse	43,058	65.2	62.2	4.6	0.1	34.8
City of Onalaska	11,491	75.5	73	3.3	0	24.5
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>54,549</b>	<b>67.3%</b>	<b>64.4%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>32.6%</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>84,831</b>	<b>70.2%</b>	<b>67.3%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>29.8%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

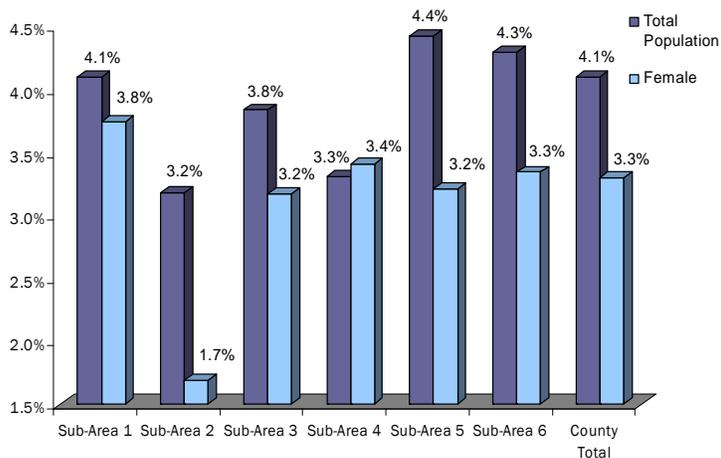
2. Figure 11.1 demonstrates how the La Crosse County unemployment rate has fluctuated. The rate hit a high in 2001, but has steadily been decreasing over the past three years. The County rate is significantly lower than the national rate in 2004, which was 5.1 percent. The rate in 2004, was slightly lower than the State of Wisconsin's 4.1 percent unemployment rate.

**Figure 11.1: La Crosse County, Unemployment Rates, 2000-2004**



3. The figure below demonstrates that the unemployment rate for women is significantly lower than their male counterparts in almost all areas of the County. It should be noted that three quarters of men over the age of 16 are involved in the labor force, while less than two-thirds of women involved.

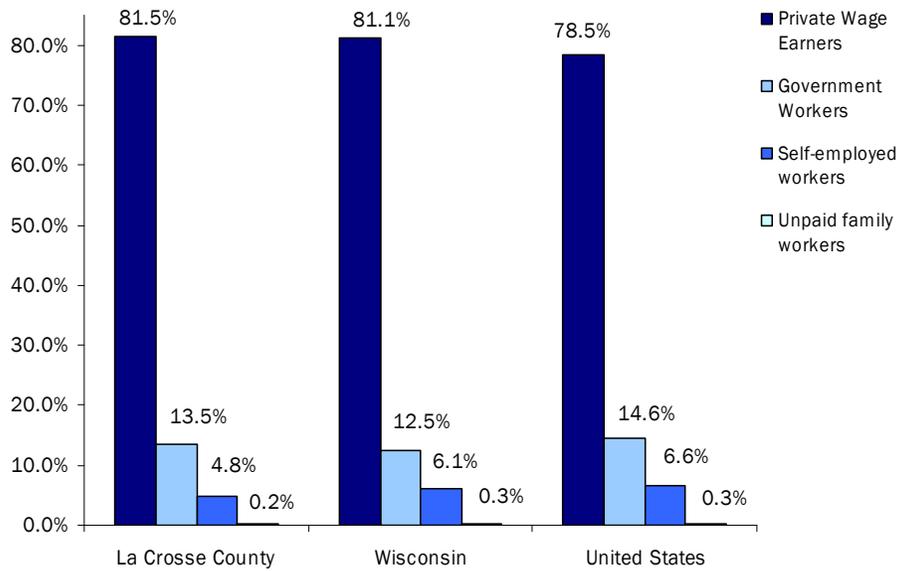
**Figure 11.2: La Crosse County, Female and Total Population Unemployment Rates, 2000**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

4. The majority of the labor force in the County derives their income from private companies. The figure below outlines the various sources of income. The largest income generator is the private sector employees, followed by government workers who account for nearly 14 percent of the labor force.

**Figure 11.3: Industry of Employed Labor Force. County, State and Nation, 2000**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(11)(c)5.

5. Table 11.3 outlines what type of occupation La Crosse County workers are participating in. Over thirty percent of employees are participating in management or professional occupations, which is the most common occupation type within the County. That rate is consistent throughout the County, except in the Town of Shelby where over 50 percent of residents are active in these occupations. Sales and office are the second most frequent occupation, with just under 30 percent of County residents participating in related occupations. In the Village of Rockland over 30 percent of residents are involved in production, transportation, and material moving occupations, which is almost double the County average in those occupations. Similarly, over 5 percent of the Town of Burns participates in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations, which is nearly five times the County average. The table demonstrates that La Crosse County has a diverse job offering for County residents.

**Table 11.3: La Crosse County, Occupational Structure as a Percentage of Labor Force, 2000**

	Employed civilian population 16 years and over	Management, professional, and related occupations	Service	Sales and office	Farming, fishing, and forestry	Construction, extraction, and maintenance	Production, transportation, and material moving
Town of Burns	525	26.9	9.9	21	5.3	8.4	28.6
Town of Farmington	905	25.4	13.8	20.7	1.4	13.6	25.1
Village of Bangor	710	23.9	12.5	28.9	0.4	14.5	19.7
Village of Rockland	356	18.5	12.6	35.1	0	3.7	30.1
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>2,496</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>25.1%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>
Town of Bangor	303	36.6	16.5	15.5	4	12.9	14.5
Town of Greenfield	864	34.5	14	24.1	0.5	9.7	17.2
Town of Washington	352	45.2	14.5	14.2	2.3	9.1	14.8
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>1,519</b>	<b>37.4%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>
Town of Barre	594	33.5	9.8	25.1	0.7	8.8	22.2
Town of Hamilton	1,184	38	13.6	24.1	1.4	8.7	14.2
Village of West Salem	2,373	29.5	15.6	23.3	0	9	22.6
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>4,151</b>	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>14.2%</b>	<b>23.8%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>20.1%</b>
Town of Holland	1,765	31.4	13.2	27.8	0.2	10.1	17.3
Town of Onalaska	2,812	29.1	15.8	25.9	0.4	9.9	19
Village of Holmen	3,443	25.3	15	24.8	0.1	9.8	25
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>8,020</b>	<b>28.0%</b>	<b>14.9%</b>	<b>25.8%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>21.2%</b>
Town of Campbell	2,540	30.6	15.4	23.4	0.4	8	22.2
Town of Medary	845	35.3	12.8	29.6	0	9.9	12.4
Town of Shelby	2,352	51.6	10.2	22.7	0.3	6	9.1
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>5,737</b>	<b>39.9%</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>
City of La Crosse	26,761	27.9	20.4	29.1	0.2	6.6	15.9
City of Onalaska	8,389	36.8	12.9	29.6	0.1	6.4	14.1
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>35,150</b>	<b>30.0%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>57,073</b>	<b>30.8%</b>	<b>16.8%</b>	<b>27.4%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

(d) Economic Base.

1. The La Crosse County economy is supported by many strong employers. Many of those employers are based in the La Crosse Metropolitan Area, but their employees come from all over the county and the region. The table below outlines the top employers in both the private and public sectors.

**Table 11.4: Top Employers in La Crosse County**

Private		
Gundersen Lutheran	5,000 FTE employees	Health Care
Trane	2,500 FTE employees	Manufacturer
Franciscan Skemp Healthcare/Mayo Health System	2,350 FTE employees	Health Care
Kwik Trip	900 FTE employees	Convenience Store
CenturyTel	830 FTE employees	Telephone Utility
The Company Store	567 FTE employees	Manufacturer
APAC Customer Service	500 FTE employees	Telephone & Telecommunications
Dairyland Power Cooperative	425 FTE employees	Electric Utility
Bethany-St. Joseph Corp.	420 FTE employees	Nursing Home
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad	400 FTE employees	Rail Transport
Government/Education		
County of La Crosse	1,100 FTE employees	Government
School District of La Crosse	1,060 FTE employees	Education
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse	1,000 FTE employees	Education
City of La Crosse	525 FTE employees	Government
School District of Holmen	449 FTE employees	Education
Western Wisconsin Technical College	418 FTE employees	Education

Source: La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce. 2005

2. Table 11.5 lists the top ten industry groups by employment for La Crosse County in March 2003. Two (2) industry types experienced employment increases between 2002 and 2003; most of the gains were in health care, and finance. Six (6) industry types were down in 2003; most of these job losses were in wholesaling, and merchandising. Data was unavailable for two (2) of the ten (10) industry types.

**Table 11.5: Top Industry Groups: La Crosse County**

Industry Group	March 2003		Number change 2002-2003
	Employers	Employees	
Educational Services	30	5,428	-64
Food Services and Drinking Places	205	4,977	-5
Hospitals	(x)	(x)	(x)
Ambulatory Health Care Services	103	4039	472
Machinery Manufacturing	(x)	(x)	(x)
Administrative and Support Services	97	2421	-78
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	54	2139	-312
Credit Intermediation and Related Activity	45	2013	216
General Merchandise Stores	12	1955	-152
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	16	1805	-78

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 2003

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(11)(d)3.

3. Table 11.6, provided by the State Department of Workforce Development, outlines the annual wages earned by La Crosse County employees organized by industry. Most of the industries are providing County employees with a strong income base. As found throughout the State, leisure, hospitality and other service industries pay a lower average annual wage.

**Table 11.6: Average Annual Wage by Industry Division in 2003**

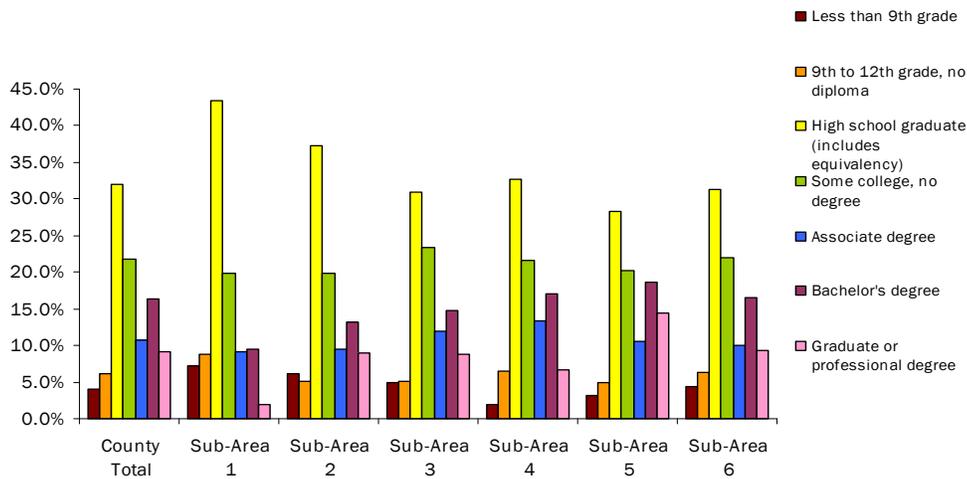
	Average Annual Wage
All Industries	\$29,982
Natural Resources	\$29,952
Construction	\$36,917
Manufacturing	\$37,342
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	\$26,404
Information	\$40,021
Financial Activities	\$35,861
Professional & Business Services	\$31,815
Education & Health	\$34,901
Leisure & Hospitality	\$9,588
Other Services	\$17,483
Public Administration	\$32,509

Source: State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 2003

(e) Education Levels.

1. Figure 11.4 graphically displays the distribution of educational attainment by adults in each of the sub-areas as well as the county.

**Figure 11.4: La Crosse County, Educational Attainment, 2000**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(11)(e)2.

2. Table 11.7 outlines the highest education attained by adults over age 25 in the County. The Town of Burns and the Town of Farmington have a large presence of adults who have graduated high school, while the Town of Medary and the Town of Shelby have a larger presence of adults with bachelor's degrees or higher educational attainment.

3. The County Over 25.4 percent of La Crosse County adults over the age of 25 have a bachelor's or graduate/professional degree, which is slightly higher than the state of Wisconsin average of 22.5 percent.

**Table 11.7: La Crosse County, Educational Attainment by Percentage of Population, 2000**

	Population Over 25 Years	Less than 9th grade (%)	9th to 12th grade, no diploma (%)	High school graduate - includes equivalency (%)	Some college, no degree (%)	Associate degree (%)	Bachelor's degree (%)	Graduate or professional degree (%)
Town of Burns	640	7.3	11.1	46.6	14.4	9.4	9.4	1.9
Town of Farmington	1,161	5.5	8.2	47.3	18.1	10.2	8.3	2.5
Village of Bangor	912	8.7	6.6	39.9	24	7.1	12.1	1.6
Village of Rockland	419	8.6	12.2	35.3	24.6	10.5	7.4	1.4
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>3,132</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>43.4%</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
Town of Bangor	361	4.2	5.3	45.2	16.9	10.8	11.1	6.6
Town of Greenfield	969	5.6	5.4	33.1	23.1	9	16	7.8
Town of Washington	511	8.6	4.5	39.7	15.7	9.4	9.6	12.5
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>1,841</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>37.3%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>
Town of Barre	657	1.5	6.5	35.9	19	16	14.2	6.8
Town of Hamilton	1,551	3.6	5.2	29.6	23.7	10	12.6	15.3
Village of West Salem	2,932	6.4	4.9	30.6	24.2	12	16	5.9
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>5,140</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>31.0%</b>	<b>23.4%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>
Town of Holland	1,921	3.2	6.7	31.7	21.4	14.3	16.8	5.9
Town of Onalaska	3,208	1.9	5.9	29.4	21	14.1	18	9.7
Village of Holmen	3,782	1.4	7	36.2	22.4	12.1	16.4	4.4
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>8,911</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>32.8%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
Town of Campbell	1,135	5.1	7	35.9	21.8	11.2	14.1	4.9
Town of Medary	973	3.3	2.1	21.1	21.7	15.6	23.3	12.9
Town of Shelby	3,166	1.4	3.6	23	18	8.2	21.5	24.3
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>5,274</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>28.2%</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
City of La Crosse	29,391	4.8	7.5	31.6	22.7	9.4	15.5	8.6
City of Onalaska	9,619	2.9	3.1	30.5	20.1	12.1	20.1	11.1
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>39,010</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>31.3%</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>16.6%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>63,308</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>31.9%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(11)(f)

(f) Commuting Patterns.

1. The vast majority, over 80 percent, of workers in La Crosse County drive alone to work as is described in the table below. It takes the average worker 17.3 minutes to travel to work. The second most common way to travel to work was by carpool, almost 10 percent of workers traveled in this fashion. In the City of La Crosse another 9 percent walked to work; while nearly 4 percent of residents in both the Towns of Bangor and Greenfield walked to work. In the Town of Washington, nearly 20 percent of people worked at home.

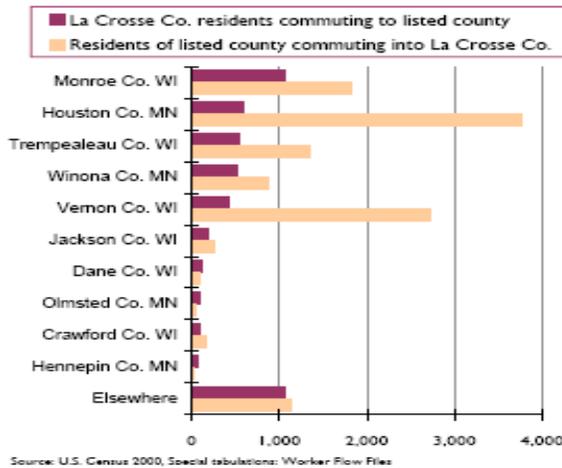
**Table 11.8: La Crosse County, Mode of Transportation to Work, 2000**

	Workers 16 years and over	Car, truck, or van – drove alone	Car, truck, or van – carpooled	Public transportation (including taxicab)	Walked	Other means	Worked at home	Mean travel time to work (minutes)
Town of Burns	520	78.5	8.1	0	3.3	0	10.2	22.5
Town of Farmington	891	80.1	10.3	0.8	1.8	0.4	6.5	34.2
Village of Bangor	704	82	10.8	0	4.7	0.4	2.1	19.6
Village of Rockland	348	83	14.9	0	0	0.6	1.4	27.9
<b>Sub-Area 1</b>	<b>2,463</b>	<b>80.7%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	
Town of Bangor	297	70	13.1	1.3	3.7	1.7	10.1	28.6
Town of Greenfield	849	77.5	10.4	0.4	3.9	0.5	7.4	21.3
Town of Washington	344	64.2	12.2	0	4.1	0	19.5	23.4
<b>Sub-Area 2</b>	<b>1,490</b>	<b>73.0%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	
Town of Barre	581	86.6	6.5	0.5	2.4	1.4	2.6	21.2
Town of Hamilton	1,171	86.3	7.4	0	0.3	0.4	5.6	20.3
Village of West Salem	2,373	85.4	8	0.2	3.5	0.9	2.1	21.2
<b>Sub-Area 3</b>	<b>4,125</b>	<b>85.8%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	
Town of Holland	1,749	85.9	9.3	0.2	0.5	0	4.1	23
Town of Onalaska	2,769	87.9	4.4	0	0.8	0.4	6.5	19.4
Village of Holmen	3,403	85.8	11.8	0	0.7	0	1.7	19.4
<b>Sub-Area 4</b>	<b>7,921</b>	<b>86.6%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	
Town of Campbell	2,512	90.1	6.3	0.8	0.8	0.4	1.6	16.2
Town of Medary	845	89.1	4.5	0.4	0.9	0.2	4.9	18.3
Town of Shelby	2,332	84.2	8.5	0.5	1	1.6	4.2	17.2
<b>Sub-Area 5</b>	<b>5,689</b>	<b>87.6%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	
City of La Crosse	26,056	75.6	9	2.4	9.1	1.6	2.3	15
City of Onalaska	8,227	87.6	9.5	0.2	0.5	0.7	1.5	16.6
<b>Sub-Area 6</b>	<b>34,283</b>	<b>78.5%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	
<b>County Total</b>	<b>55,971</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>17.3</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

2. The figure below demonstrates how many residents travel from outside into La Crosse County for work and where La Crosse County residents travel to for work. La Crosse County employers draw from a large region both in and outside of Wisconsin. Most County residents who work outside of La Crosse County commute to Monroe County, Wisconsin or to Houston County, Minnesota.

**Figure 11.5: Number of Residents Commuting into and out of La Crosse County, 2000**



(g) Commercial and Industrial Building Trends. Table 11.9 outlines where the industrial and business parks are located in La Crosse County. The table also provides the size of the parks. This information is positive for the County as there are many different options for employers looking to expand in or relocate to La Crosse. Eleven of fifteen parks have vacancies available.

**Table 11.9: Industrial and Business Parks in La Crosse County**

Name	Location	Size (acres)
French Island Multi-Modal Facility	Campbell	N/A
Holland Business Park	Holland	35
Cedar Creek Business Center	Holmen	25
Holmen Business Park	Holmen	12
Northstar Business Park	Holmen	22
La Crosse Airport Industrial Park	La Crosse	94
Coulee Sites Industrial Park	La Crosse	135
Grand Crossing Industrial Park	La Crosse	125
La Crosse International Business Park	La Crosse	85
La Crosse Interstate Business Park	La Crosse	92
Onalaska East Gate Addition Business Park	Onalaska	38
Onalaska Elmwood Business Park	Onalaska	130
Onalaska Riders Club Road Addition Business Park	Onalaska	70
Onalaska Valley View Business Center	Onalaska	40
Lakeview Business Park	West Salem	150

Source: La Crosse Area Development Corporation, 2005

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(11)(h)

(h) Environmentally Contaminated Sites. There are a significant amount of contaminated sites within La Crosse County. The table below lists the number and types of contaminated sites found within La Crosse County. The numbers and the descriptions of the types of contamination have been provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The majority of sites are within the city of La Crosse or in surrounding communities. There are other contaminated sites located throughout the county. One of the most well recognized sites is the Onalaska Municipal Landfill which has been designated as a US EPA Superfund site. Often, the sites listed in this database will require significant attention and careful clean-up before they can be redeveloped and positively contribute to the County's economy.

**Table 11.10: Contaminated Sites in La Crosse County**

# of Sites	Type of Sites
311	Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST)
110	Environmental Repair (ERP)
420	LUST and ERP
447	Abandoned Container (AC) and Spill
2	Liability Exemption (VPLE)
1	Superfund Site (Onalaska Municipal Landfill)
<b>1,290</b>	<b>Total Contaminated Sites</b>

Source: State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 2005

1. Abandoned Container (AC). An abandoned container, with potentially hazardous contents, has been inspected and recovered. No known discharge to the environment has occurred. If the container discharged a hazardous substance, a SPILL activity will be created at this location (See Spills module).

2. Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST). A LUST site has contaminated soil and/or groundwater with petroleum, which includes toxic and cancer causing substances. However, given time, petroleum contamination naturally breaks down in the environment (biodegradation). Some LUST sites may emit potentially explosive vapors.

3. Environmental Repair (ERP). ERP sites are sites other than LUSTs that have contaminated soil and/or groundwater. Examples include industrial spills (or dumping) that need long term investigation, buried containers of hazardous substances, and closed landfills that have caused contamination. The ERP module includes petroleum contamination from above-ground (but not from underground) storage tanks.

4. Spills. A discharge of a hazardous substance that may adversely impact, or threaten to impact public health, welfare or the environment. Spills are usually cleaned up quickly.

5. Liability Exemption (VPLE). VPLEs are an elective process in which a property owner conducts an environmental investigation and cleanup of an entire property and then receives limits on future liability for that contamination under s. 292.15, Wisconsin Statutes. An individual, business or unit of government can receive the liability exemption after a completed cleanup is approved.

(i) Employment Projections.

1. The State of Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development's "La Crosse County Workforce Profile" provides insight into the regional employment forecast for the County. This section illustrates employment forecasts for the La Crosse County area and for the entire State of Wisconsin.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(11)(i)2.

2. Table 11.11 lists the top 10 occupations experiencing the fastest growth rates and the most job openings in Western Wisconsin. Many of the fastest growing occupations fall into either the "management, professional or related occupations" category or the "service" category, and there is a particular growth trend in computer software and support occupations as well as medical support occupations. The areas with the most openings are generally "service occupations," with some exceptions.

**Table 11.11: Western Region Occupation Projections: 2010**

	Top Ten Occupations	Education & Training Typically Required*	Average Wage**
Fastest Growth	Computer Support Specialists	Associate degree	\$16.65
	Network Systems/Data Communications Analysis	Bachelor's degree	\$23.49
	Medical Records/Health Info Techs	Associate degree	\$11.43
	Medical Assistants	1-12 mo. on-the-job	\$10.61
	Personal and Home Care Aides	1-month or less training	\$8.25
	Computer/Information Systems Managers	Work experience & degree	\$29.77
	Social/Human Service Assistants	1-12 mo. on-the-job	\$12.30
	Computer Systems Analysts	Bachelor's degree	\$24.14
	Home Health Aides	1-month or less training	\$9.03
Most Openings	Dental Assistants	1-12 mo. on-the-job	\$10.93
	Combination Food Preparation/Service Workers Including Fast Food	1-month or less training	\$6.91
	Cashiers	1-month or less training	\$7.60
	Retail Salespersons	1-month or less training	\$9.04
	Waiters/Waitresses	1-month or less training	\$7.55
	Registered Nurses	Bachelor's degree	\$20.23
	Truck Drivers/Heavy/Tractor-Trailer	1-12 mo. on-the-job	\$20.88
	Janitors/Cleaners, Maids/Housekeepers	1-month or less training	\$9.42
	Office Clerks/General	1-month or less training	\$10.27
	Bartenders	1-month or less training	\$7.41
Nursing Aids/Orderlies/Attendants	1-month or less training	\$9.95	

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, 2002

Western WDA includes Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau and Vernon counties.

\*The most common way to enter the occupation, not the only way

\*\* Wages from Occupation Employment Statistics survey responses for region, 2001

(j) Sources:

1. U.S. Bureau of the Census
2. State of Wisconsin Departments of Administration, Natural Resources, and Workforce Development
3. La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce
4. La Crosse Area Development Corporation.

(12) Intergovernmental Cooperation.

(a) Overview.

1. This chapter was prepared within the context of many existing local, regional, and state plans, which were reviewed throughout this planning effort. The planning process considered the larger regional context and involved all local and neighboring governmental jurisdictions, planning organizations, agencies, stakeholders, and allowed for strong public participation.

2. Intergovernmental cooperation is a critical component of this planning effort and the future wellbeing of La Crosse County. Local services and planning strategies can be strengthened by cooperative relationships throughout the County. This chapter contains an overview of the County's intergovernmental relationships and identifies known existing or potential conflicts between this Comprehensive Plan and the plans of local cities, villages, towns, School Districts, the State of Wisconsin, and important federal agencies that maintain a presence in the County.

(b) La Crosse County.

1. La Crosse County encompasses 481 square miles and is located in western Wisconsin along the Mississippi River. The County's 2004 population was estimated at 109,616. La Crosse County is approximately 150 miles southeast of Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN, 175 miles from Waterloo, Iowa, and 145 miles from Madison, WI. The County is comprised of 18 local units of government: 12 towns, 4 villages, and 2 cities. Interstate 90 and the La Crosse River bisect the County from east to west. Trempealeau and Jackson County border La Crosse County to the north, Monroe County lies to the east, Vernon County lies to the south, and the Mississippi River and Minnesota lie to the west. This Comprehensive Plan is an update to the County's existing plan, the La Crosse County Development Plan 2020. In addition, the County has adopted numerous other plans, studies, and ordinances, including:

- a. La Crosse County, Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Plan, 1980
- b. La Crosse County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 1998
- c. La Crosse County Land & Water Resource Management Plan, 1999
- d. Zoning Ordinance
- e. Land Division Ordinance.

2. La Crosse County is also party to general cooperative agreements for fire, police, rescue, road maintenance, solid waste, recycling, and other services with several towns, villages, and cities in the County.

(c) City of La Crosse.

The City of La Crosse is located on the west side of La Crosse County along the Mississippi River. La Crosse is the largest incorporated area in the County and serves as the County seat. The City's population in 2004 was estimated at 51,507, which is down slightly from the 2000 U.S. Census population of 51,818. The City has a 2003 adopted comprehensive plan, a park and recreation plan, a zoning ordinance, a land division ordinance, and many other plans and studies that guide community policies and actions.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(12)(d)

(d) City of Onalaska. The City of Onalaska is located north of La Crosse and is the second largest municipality in the County with a 2004 estimated population of 15,782, an increase from the 2000 population of 14,839. The City of Onalaska adopted a comprehensive plan in 2004 and has a zoning and land division ordinance, as well as many other ordinances and plans that inform community decisions.

(e) Villages of Bangor, Holmen, Rockland, and West Salem. The Villages of Bangor (population 1,394), Rockland (population 639), and West Salem (population 4,809) are located along I-90 in the central part of the County. The Village of Holmen (population 6,984) is located along Highway 53 in the northern part of the County. All Villages, except Bangor, gained population between 2000 and 2004. Holmen was the most rapidly growing community (at a rate of approximately 13 percent) during this time period in part because of its location near Onalaska on Highway 53, which provides transportation access to both Onalaska and La Crosse. Holmen adopted a comprehensive plan in 2004. The La Crosse County Development Plan 2020 guides land use decisions in Bangor, Rockland, and West Salem.

(f) Towns.

1. The County's 12 Towns are Bangor, Barre, Burns, Campbell, Farmington, Greenfield, Hamilton, Holland, Medary, Onalaska, Shelby, and Washington. The estimated 2004 populations of these Towns ranged from 596 (Bangor) to 5,406 (Onalaska). All of the Towns, with the exception of Barre, gained population between 2000 and 2004.

2. All of the Towns are under County zoning, shoreland, and floodplain ordinances. Each Town has a development plan that was drafted as part of the La Crosse County Development Plan 2020 (1995). However, many towns have developed or are currently developing a comprehensive plan in conjunction with the La Crosse County comprehensive planning process that will update or replace these development plans per comprehensive planning requirements enacted in 1999.

(g) Surrounding Counties. La Crosse County is bordered by four counties on its north, east, and south sides, and by the Mississippi River and Minnesota on the west. Each of these counties has a much smaller population than La Crosse; Trempealeau County's 2000 population was 27,010; Jackson County's was 19,100; Monroe County's was 40,896; and Vernon County's was 28,056. These neighboring counties are primarily agricultural with outstanding natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities. Existing or potential conflicts between La Crosse Counties and surrounding counties will be explored through this planning process.

(h) Regional Planning Jurisdiction.

1. La Crosse County is located within the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission's (MRRPC) jurisdiction. The MRRPC prepares and adopts regional or county-wide plans and represents Pierce, Pepin, Buffalo, Trempealeau, La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford, Jackson, and Monroe counties. The RPC was established to:

- a. Carry out comprehensive and intergovernmental planning;
- b. Have jurisdiction throughout the seven-county area, including incorporated and unincorporated areas;
- c. Meet area-wide requirements so local jurisdictions could receive federal grants; and
- d. Provide an organization to receive federal grants.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(12)(h)2.

2. Services provided by the RPC include:
  - a. Comprehensive planning;
  - b. Open space, recreational and environmental planning;
  - c. Economic development;
  - d. Demographic information and projects;
  - e. Technical assistance to local governments;
  - f. Geographic information services; and
  - g. Aerial photography distribution.
3. MRRPC's planning documents and profiles that relate to La Crosse

County include:

Strategy, 2001;

2001.

- a. The MRRPC Comprehensive Economic Development
- b. The MRRPC Economic Development Program, 2000; and
- c. The MRRPC Industry Cluster and Regional Trade Report,

(i) Important State and Federal Agency Jurisdictions. There are many state and federal agencies that affect planning in La Crosse County. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) District 5 plays a critical role in many aspects of the County's transportation system, from highway design and development to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and networks. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also has a prominent role in the County because of the many DNR-owned land and facilities that are located here. The University of Wisconsin Extension office is located in the City of La Crosse and serves as an educational resource for County residents. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a presence in the County because of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The U.S Army Corps of Engineers also maintains a presence in the County because of their ownership and management of locks and dams along the Mississippi River, which borders the western edge of the County. The County and its local units of government recognize the importance of working with these state and federal agencies, and are committed to continuing an ongoing dialogue with these agencies, both during and after the development of this Comprehensive Plan.

(j) School Districts.

a. La Crosse County is served by eight school districts, as described in the Utilities and Community Facilities Element and depicted on the Schools and School District Map.

b. There are no apparent existing or potential conflicts between the County and the school districts. However, this will be explored throughout the planning process and updated if necessary.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.01(12)(k)

(k) Existing or Potential Conflicts and Process to Resolve Conflicts as follows:

a. Existing or potential conflicts related to land use decision-making have been reduced due to the multi-jurisdictional process used to develop county and local comprehensive plans. The intergovernmental effort required to develop local plans that concertedly and uniformly support a regional plan has been an ongoing effort. Ostensibly, these efforts have reduced the potential for land use conflicts in the future especially since all plans were developed over approximately the same amount of time and because the La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan unites existing plans into a cohesive document.

b. The process to resolve conflicts is tied to open communication and willingness of elected officials to maintain clear and responsive channels of communication in matters of conflict. The La Crosse County Zoning, Planning & Land Information Department is proactively working with local jurisdictions to develop boundary agreements to mitigate future disagreements within extraterritorial jurisdictions before intergovernmental conflict becomes an issue. Similar efforts are ongoing throughout La Crosse County to ensure effective cooperation between all local governments is maintained

(l) Sources. Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission; La Crosse County Website, October 2005; and La Crosse County Economic Development Plan 2020.

31.02 ISSUES, VISION AND GOALS.

(1) Planning Issues and Opportunities. The comprehensive plan, by its nature, covers a wide number of topics. Although there is much to address, it is also necessary to identify the most important issues. This helps to focus our goals, recommendations and implementation strategies. The plan will develop detailed recommendations that address the following:

(a) Varied Growth Management Needs. Address the growth management and land use planning needs of urban, rural, and suburban regions in the County.

(b) Quality of Life. Identify the distinct factors that contribute to the livability of La Crosse County. Evaluate and develop strategies to maintain and enhance these features.

(c) Improved Local & County Decision Making. Develop a framework that encourages informed planning, zoning, and development review decisions at the local level. Continue to support County coordination, oversight, and facilitation of these efforts.

(d) Policies for Agricultural Transition Areas. Develop clear criteria to guide any changes in areas zoned "transitional agriculture". As this is a 20-year plan, consider both short and long-term policy.

(e) Prime and Productive Agricultural Lands. Develop realistic strategies to protect prime and productive agricultural lands from the encroachment of development. Define and differentiate between lands with high and marginal agricultural value.

(f) Maintain Natural Resources. Continue to protect the various natural resources that exist in different parts of the County as they significantly contribute to the quality of life. Promote consistency among different standards managed at the Federal, State, County, and local levels.

(g) Regional Economic Coordination. Identify strategies that promote regional cooperation in economic development efforts. Include Local and County governments and all levels of educational institutions within and adjacent to La Crosse County.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.02(1)(h)

(h) Attainable Housing Stock. Work with local governments and organizations to ensure that there are affordable and available housing choices for all residents.

(i) Strategy for Transportation Options. Plan for a variety of viable transportation options that meet the projected needs of residents and businesses.

(j) Efficient and Effective Services. Maintain the efficiency and quality of County services while identifying areas for improvement.

(k) Implementation. Identify feasible implementation tools that the County and local governments can utilize to implement the plan, including updating the County zoning code.

(2) Vision Statement. La Crosse County is a diverse and vibrant hub set amid the Upper Mississippi River and scenic coulees. Within this setting are valuable natural, agricultural, cultural, transportation, educational, and economic resources. These resources provide residents, businesses, and visitors distinct urban amenities and small-town livability. Preserving these resources and strengthening the connections between them is the foundation for maintaining and enhancing quality of life and economic opportunity.

(3) Comprehensive Plan Goals. Goals are statements that describe specific elements of the vision. These goals should be considered "guiding principles" for the plan, clearly outlining what the plan seeks to accomplish. Realistic goals provide the framework for the development of attainable policies and actions. The goals are based on the existing goals from the La Crosse County 2020 Development Plan and have been updated from feedback gained at public meetings and from the County Steering Committee.

(a) Land Use and Growth Management Goal: Work in partnership with area communities to manage and guide future growth, recognizing that land is an irreplaceable resource. Enhance the quality of life by protecting both natural resources and farmland and by promoting urban infill and redevelopment. Guide growth to developed areas where public facilities and services can be economically provided.

(b) Farmland Preservation Goal: Direct growth away from prime farmland and protect productive agricultural operations from the encroachment of incompatible uses. Evaluate and utilize programs and initiatives that support this goal.

(c) Property Rights Goal: Utilize consistent policies and implementation tools that provide equity and fairness to landowners while preserving public health, welfare, and the community character.

(d) Natural Resources Goal: Preserve and protect the overall beauty and natural resources of the County as these areas contribute to quality of life and are a critical component of the County's economic development strategy. Protect features including bluffs, coulees, wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, rivers, streams, woodlands, remnant prairies/grasslands, open spaces, and groundwater recharge areas.

(e) Air Quality Goal: Monitor air quality within the County and region to ensure both compliance with existing State and Federal laws, and to promote the exceeding of these standards.

(f) Groundwater Quality Goal: Pursue activities that maintain, protect, and enhance the County's high quality groundwater resources.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.02(3)(g)

(g) Cultural Resources Goal: Preserve the artistic, cultural, historic, and archeological resources as these features add to the area's quality of life and its rich cultural heritage.

(h) Economic Development Goal: Seek a cooperative, intergovernmental approach to business retention and recruitment. Utilize strategies that capitalize on the County's existing assets, including its available workforce, transportation access, and the natural features that contribute to quality of life. Cooperate with other entities to improve the region's position as an attractive and competitive place to start, grow, and expand business.

(i) Transportation Goal: Promote a transportation system that creates safe, efficient, convenient, and economical options for residents and business users. Coordinate all transportation planning with its impact on land use and growth patterns. Address the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and disabled residents when planning for surface and non-surface transportation.

(j) Housing Goal: Ensure that the County has an available housing supply that is adequate, affordable, and well-maintained, which meets the needs of all income levels, ages, special-needs populations, and household types.

(k) Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal: Cooperate and communicate with all local, state and federal governments, adjacent counties, and regional organizations to provide County residents and businesses with timely information as well as efficient and economical services.

(l) Utilities and Community Facilities Goal: Maintain service and staffing levels appropriate for the varied urban, suburban, and rural community expectations. Promote intergovernmental efficiencies and improvements, including the use of renewable energy sources.

(m) Social and Community Service Goal: Ensure the region continues to offer quality, affordable, and efficient services to its residents through public and private providers. Maintain and enhance the quality of education, healthcare, childcare, and related services, which contribute to the quality of life of residents.

31.03 LAND USE PLAN.

(1) Introduction and Background.

The Land Use Plan consists of the following components:

- Introduction and Background.
  - a. Relationship between County and Town Plans
  - b. Summary of Growth Projections
- Land Use and Growth Management Goal
- General Land Use Policies
- Land Use Map
- Land Use Districts
- Recommendations and Programs

This element of the Comprehensive Plan contains goals, objectives, and actions to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property in La Crosse County. This chapter also explains future land use designations and delineates these uses on the Future Land Use Map.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.03(1)(a)

(a) Relationship between County and Town Plans. There is a direct relationship between the local and County plans. To accommodate minor differences in classification among local jurisdictional plans within La Crosse County, broad categories were developed to "collapse" similar uses. The intent is that the broad County plan will generally depict the planned growth pattern, while local plans will dictate more specifically the type, amount, and intensity of allowable development.

(b) Summary of Growth Projections.

1. Future land use projections represent generalized growth scenarios based on State projections and current development densities. The projections indicate the County should generally plan to accommodate 5,000 additional combined acres of residential, commercial, and industrial land over the next 20 years. A generalized look at land supply shows that there are nearly 190,000 acres that are physically suited for development.

2. When preparing a broad growth plan at this scale, it is often necessary to identify growth areas that exceed the generalized projection. This technique, often referred to as a "market adjustment" is done to account for minor changes in market conditions and the immediate availability of land designated for development purposes.

(2) Land Use and Growth Management Goal.

(a) The following goal is the "guiding principle" for the Land Use Plan. This goal is based on the existing goals from the La Crosse County 2020 Development Plan and has been updated from feedback gained at public meetings and from the County Steering Committee.

(b) Work in partnership with area municipalities to manage and guide future growth, recognizing that land is an irreplaceable resource. Enhance the quality of life by protecting both natural resources and farmland and by promoting urban infill and redevelopment. Guide growth to developed areas where public facilities and services can be economically provided.

(3) General Land Use Policies. Policies are courses of action that identify a way in which activities should be conducted to achieve the Land Use and Growth Management Goal above. The following policies suggest action for advisory and regulatory implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

(a) This Plan is adopted as a broad policy document that incorporates the more specific recommendations of city, village and town comprehensive plans. These local plans and policies should be adopted by reference except in instances where interests of the entire County are determined not to be served by specified portions of the local plan.

(b) Work with the towns, villages, cities and surrounding counties to resolve remaining incompatibilities between local land use plans over the 20-year planning period.

(c) Identify a sufficient supply of developable land for a range of different uses, in areas, types, and densities consistent with the local municipality's wishes and service requirements. Plan updates or amendments shall be required for County and local plans as communities reach their projected growth guidelines projected in this chapter.

(d) Guide intensive new development requiring higher levels of municipal utilities and services to cities, villages, or rural hamlets with available services.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.03(3)(e)

(e) Encourage the preservation of cultural, historic, archaeological sites, and environmentally sensitive areas.

(f) Encourage the protection of economically productive areas including farmland and forests.

(g) Encourage the use of conservation neighborhood design for rural residential development in appropriate areas and where consistent with local community wishes. Support other innovative approaches to land development to increase flexibility and achieve the goals of this Plan.

(h) Update codes, ordinances, and other County programs, to implement recommendations in the County Plan. Consider the development of new zoning districts as well as policies that allow for density-based zoning programs as described in this chapter.

(4) Land Use Map. The Land Use Plan map has been created based on the following:

(a) The current map combines the future land use recommendations of the municipalities that have completed their plans. Land use plans will be incorporated into the County plan, upon completion and adoption.

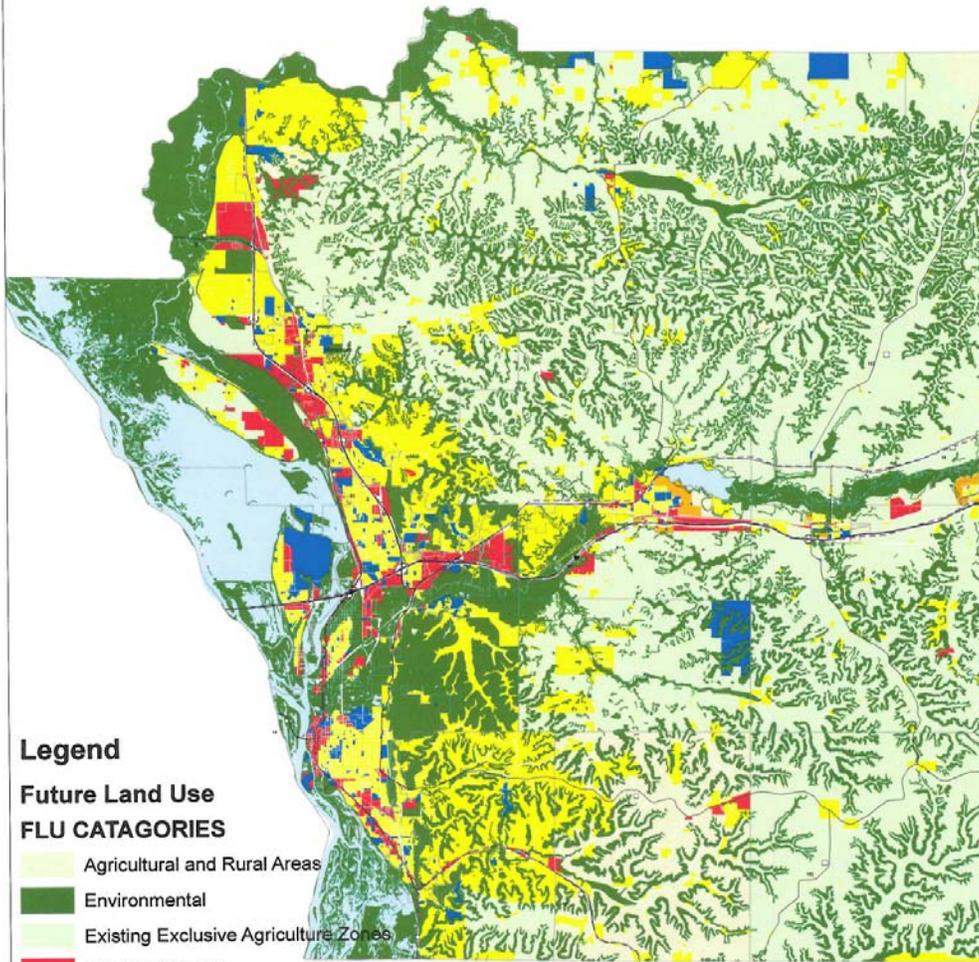
(b) The map shows existing land uses as depicted in the detailed County Land Use inventory (UW-La Crosse).

(c) Five broad categories have been established to guide the County planning process as discussed at previous meetings. A description of the uses allowed within these categories is found on the following pages.

(d) Existing zones of exclusive agriculture are shown within the Agricultural and Rural District. This is important from a policy standpoint as these areas will need to go through both a formal rezoning and land division process if more intensive developments (e.g. subdivisions over five lots) are to be allowed. This plan will have a great impact on what requirements are placed on developments in these areas.

(e) The land use plan indicates several "design and planning corridors." These represent areas of future study and detailed recommendations. The County plan is intended to provide broad guidance on both the form and use of development in these corridors.

# Future Land Use Map



## Legend

### Future Land Use FLU CATEGORIES

-  Agricultural and Rural Areas
-  Environmental
-  Existing Exclusive Agriculture Zones
-  Non-Residential
-  Public-Institutional
-  Residential
-  Planned Growth Areas
-  Water
-  Corridor Planning and Design Districts

EXHIBIT A



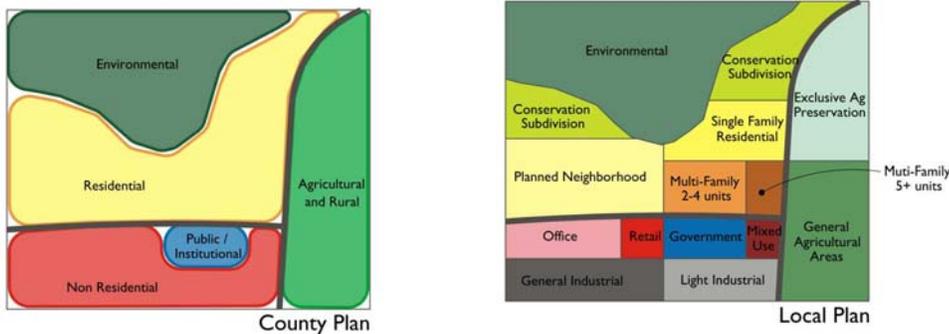
Revised Map 08/2010

LA CROSSE COUNTY 03/08

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.03(5)

(5) Future Land Use Districts. This section outlines the planned future land use districts for La Crosse County depicted on the Draft Future Land Use Map. County Districts (indicated as numbered headings, below) represent a consolidation of the more specific local land use districts. This relationship is depicted below.

Each category of land use contains an overall purpose statement that describes the intent of each district and its allowable uses. Categories may be implemented through multiple zoning districts.



(a) Residential. A residential district includes land uses where the predominant use is housing. In areas that are zoned residential, buildings may include single family housing, multiple family housing (apartments, duplexes, townhomes, and condominiums) or mobile homes. Zoning for residential use may permit some services or work opportunities or may totally exclude business and industry. Residential development in La Crosse County may include the following types:

1. Single-Family. A single-family home is a detached, free-standing residential structure. Single-family residential development in La Crosse County includes the following:

a. Rural Residential 1. This district is generally intended to preserve agricultural lands and provide for very low-density rural, single-family detached residential development at a density of approximately 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres.

b. Rural Residential 2. This district is generally intended for low-density rural single-family detached residential development at a density of at least 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres.

c. Rural Residential 3. This district is generally intended for low-density single-family detached residential development at a density of 1-5 acres per dwelling unit.

d. Single Family 1. This district is generally intended for low-density suburban single-family detached residential development at a density between two and five homes per acre.

e. Single Family 2. This district is generally intended for single-family detached residential development up to a maximum density of six dwelling units per acre.

2. Multi-Family (2-4 Units). This classification includes housing where multiple, separate housing units are contained within one building.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.03(5)(a)3.

3. Multi-Family (5+ Units). This classification includes housing where five or more separate housing units are contained within one building. This district includes the most "dense" residential structures found in La Crosse County. Large apartment buildings, student housing, and senior-care facilities are common examples. Care needs to be taken with development of these facilities to ensure adequate parking, access, and traffic facilities exist to accommodate many users.

4. Planned Neighborhoods. This classification refers to a planned mixture of predominantly single-family residential development, combined with one or more of the following land use types: two-family/townhouse residential, mixed residential, neighborhood office, neighborhood business, institutional, and public open space. Planned neighborhoods generally have a minimum size of 40 acres. Sites larger than 120 acres should be developed as multiple neighborhoods, with each neighborhood designed to be integrated into an overall plan. Open space should be provided in each neighborhood.

5. Conservation Subdivision.

a. Wisconsin law (s. 66.1027) defines a conservation subdivision as "a housing development in a rural setting that is characterized by compact lots and common open space, and where the natural features of land are maintained to the greatest extent possible." Conservation subdivisions allow for an adjustment in the location of residential dwelling units on a parcel of land so long as the total number of dwelling units does not exceed the number of units otherwise permitted in the zoning district. The dwelling units are grouped or "clustered" on only a portion of a parcel of land. The remainder of the site is preserved as open space, farmland, or as an environmentally and culturally sensitive area. The clustering of the dwellings into a small area is made possible by reducing the individual lot sizes. The open space is permanently protected and held in common ownership.

b. Conservation subdivisions are an alternative approach to conventional lot-by-lot division of land in rural areas which spreads development evenly throughout a parcel with little regard to the impact on the natural and cultural features of the area. Conservation subdivisions enable a developer to concentrate units on the most buildable portion of a site, preserving natural drainage systems, open space, and environmentally and culturally sensitive areas.<sup>1</sup>

6. Mobile Home District.

a. These districts include accommodations for mobile homes, or manufactured housing. These structures are generally defined as those built in factories, rather than on site, that are delivered to the location where they will be occupied. They are usually transported by semi-trucks over public highways. They are less expensive per square foot than site-built homes, and are often associated with rural areas and high-density developments, sometimes referred to as trailer parks.

b. Communities that contain regulations for a "mobile home district" often require special zoning to accommodate these uses. Special requirements may include permanent foundations, minimum footprints, minimum roof pitches, and other standards to control for design and appearance of these housing units.

7. Institutional Living. These structures include accommodations for people under formally authorized supervised care or custody. Populations residing in these units include patients or inmates. Residential living activity associated with dormitories, group homes, barracks, retirement homes, nursing homes, etc. would all fall within this category. These activities may occur in any number of structural types (single-family homes, multi-family homes, manufactured homes, etc.) but the activity characteristics of such living is not the same as the other subcategories under residential activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Information from UW Extension Conservation Subdivision Ordinance Guide

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.03(5)(a)8.

8. Transitional Areas. Growth areas identified in local plans or intergovernmental agreements that are anticipated to require municipal water, sewer, or other related service.

(b) Non Residential. A non-residential district includes uses that are business related, including commercial, retail, or industrial. Zoning for these areas is established to provide separation from incompatible uses, which may include residential neighborhoods. Non-residential development in La Crosse County may include the following types:

1. Commercial – Retail. This district includes areas dedicated to the sale of goods or merchandise for personal or household consumption. Structures include neighborhood stores, or designated shopping districts such as a downtown area. Commercial districts may also include malls or areas of intensive transportation access, such as interchange areas off highways and interstates.

2. Office. Office developments include buildings that provide a workplace for primarily administrative and managerial workers. Office uses can occur in almost any building, though modern technical requirements (such as internet access) limit some older structures for reuse. A typical office building may be divided into sections for different companies or may be dedicated to one company. Large companies may develop a campus-like environment including landscaping, fountains, or other natural or artistic elements. These uses generally require sewer and water facilities and large parking lots to accommodate commuters. Considerations for development include many of the same elements as “Commercial” uses, including signage, building and lighting standards, appropriate access, and compatibility with surrounding uses.

3. Mixed Use. Mixed-use development refers to the practice of containing more than one type of use in a building or set of buildings. This includes a combination of residential, commercial, industrial, office, institutional, or other uses.

4. Conservation – Mixed Use. A combination of residential, commercial, industrial, office, institutional, or other uses developed in an environmentally low-impact manner. It is generally recommended that at least 50% of the site is preserved as open space, farmland, or as an environmentally and culturally sensitive area.

5. General Industrial. All industrial activities are allowed in this district including assembly plants, manufacturing plants, industrial machinery, shipping, and trucking.

6. Light Industrial. Light industrial is usually a less intensive use than “General Industrial,” and is more consumer-oriented than business-oriented (i.e., most light industry products are produced for end users rather than for use by other industries). Light industrial has less environmental impact than heavy industrial and is more tolerated in residential areas.

7. Transitional Areas. Growth areas identified in local plans or intergovernmental agreements that are anticipated to require municipal water, sewer, or other related service.

(c) Public/Institutional. This district encompasses a range of public, social, and institutional uses. These uses are public or semi-public, and generally tax exempt. Specific uses include schools, libraries, parks, municipal buildings, emergency response and public safety buildings, health care facilities, travel-related facilities, places of worship, or other governmental lands. As a broad policy plan, the County Land Use Plan will not depict the exact location of these facilities. Siting guidelines for new facilities are proposed in the recommendations section of this chapter.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.03(5)(d)

(d) Agricultural and Rural. The Agricultural and Rural District is established for areas in which agricultural and certain compatible low intensity uses are encouraged as the principal uses of land.

1. Exclusive Agricultural Preservation Areas.

a. The purpose of the Exclusive Agricultural District is to preserve agricultural land for food and fiber production; protect productive farming by preventing conflicts between incompatible uses; maintain a viable agricultural base to support agricultural processing and service industries; reduce costs of providing services to scattered non-farm uses; promote orderly urban growth; implement the provisions of the County Farmland Preservation Plan, when adopted and periodically revised; and comply with the provisions of the Farmland Preservation Law to permit eligible landowners to receive tax credits under ss. 71.09(11), Wis. Stats.

b. This district is generally intended to apply to lands which include all classes of soils in the County that are in productive agricultural use including, but not limited to, land demonstrated to be productive for forestry, dairy, livestock raising and grazing; lands historically farmed which are integral parts of farm operations; lands for the production of specialty crops; and lands that are potentially productive given improvements such as irrigation or drainage.

c. A developer or land owner wishing to remove property from Exclusive Agricultural Preservation Areas shall provide adequate evidence to Town and County governments that the proposal meets the following criteria:

i. The development proposal is consistent with the locally adopted land use plan map and related policies.

ii. Land proposed for rezoning does not have a history of productive farming activities or is not viable for long-term agricultural use.

iii. Land is too small to be economically used for agricultural purposes or is inaccessible to the farm machinery needed to produce and harvest agricultural products.

iv. The land is located such that there would be minimum conflicts with surrounding agricultural uses.

v. The land does not include natural features such as wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, or significant woodlands that would be adversely affected by non-farm development.

vi. The lay of the land will allow for construction of a road or driveway that is suitable for emergency vehicle travel. Safe access from the road or driveway onto existing roadways shall be required.

vii. A need for additional non-farm development can be demonstrated in the community.

viii. Outside of existing or planned sanitary district limits, only land that is comprised of soils that are suitable for on-site septic systems shall be considered.

ix. Provision of public facilities to accommodate the proposed development will not place an unreasonable burden on the ability of the community and County to provide those facilities.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.03(5)(d)2.

2. General Agricultural Areas.

a. This category indicates other rural and agricultural areas that are not designated as planned exclusive agriculture areas. New residential development should be limited to a density of one home per 20 acres. However, this district does not require a 20 acre minimum lot size. Splits and land divisions within this category will be limited to one split per five years. Lot size and physical constraints will be determined by local and County ordinances.

b. New developments are strongly encouraged to utilize cluster and conservation housing principles (described in Section 6.2).

(e) Environmental. The Environmental District includes areas where special protection is encouraged because of unique landscape, topographical features, wildlife, or historical value. They contain the best remaining woodlands and wetlands, wildlife habitats, undeveloped shorelands and floodlands, groundwater recharge and discharge areas, and steeply sloped lands in the County. In developed areas, this designation also refers to parks and open spaces used for recreation or environmental purposes.

1. Floodplain. A floodplain is flat or nearly flat land adjacent to a stream or river that experiences occasional or periodic flooding. It includes the floodway, which consists of the stream channel and adjacent areas that carry flood flows, and the flood fringe, which are areas covered by the flood but which do not experience a strong current.

2. Steep Slopes. Slopes are the grade of the land determined by the vertical rise or fall in feet, per horizontal length in feet, measured perpendicular to the land contour and expressed as a percentage. The County prohibits development on slopes of 30% or greater. This Plan recommends that development be limited on slopes greater than 20% but less than 30% as development in these areas create an erosion hazard and the potential for off-site damage to public and private property. It is recommended that ordinances are updated to revise this standard.

3. Wetlands. Wetlands are those areas where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic vegetation and which have soils indicative of wet conditions and indicated on NRCS or County wetland inventory maps.

4. Parks and Recreation. Land and water resources designated for recreation where people can engage in active and passive recreation activities.

5. Preserved Lands. In La Crosse County, these include lands owned by a non-profit land trust for permanent conservation purposes. Lands may include blufflands, prairies, wetlands, and streams.

6. Open Space. Structured or unstructured open space areas required for various types of development, or reserved for recreation or aesthetic purposes. These spaces are generally suited for passive recreational pursuits, and are sometimes developed or reserved to buffer different types of land uses or resources.

7. Overlay Districts. This category includes any local or County adopted "overlay" districts prepared to protect viewsheds, historic, archeological, or culturally significant sites. Specific guidelines for each overlay will be enforced through the plan and applicable ordinances.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.03(6)

(6) Land Use Policies, Recommendations, and Programs.

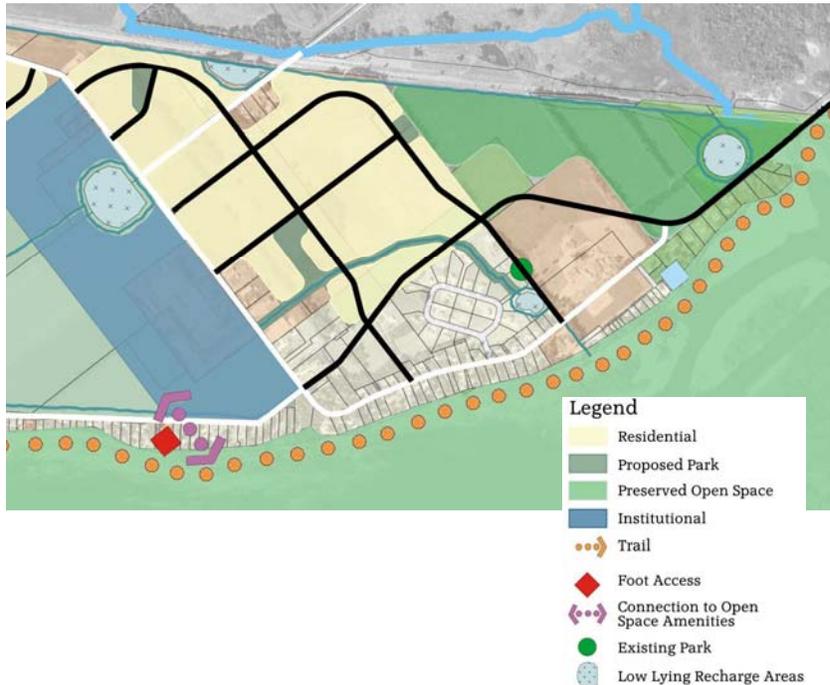
(a) Development Review and Ordinance Updates.

1. Develop Neighborhood / Sub Area Plans for Designated Development Areas.

a. This Plan strongly recommends that municipalities supplement their general land use plans with more detailed "neighborhood" or "sub area" plans in areas where development areas are identified. Municipalities should consider such plans for planned development areas greater than 40 acres. This is especially important for areas adjacent to sensitive environmental features, highway interchanges, or development areas adjacent to existing neighborhoods.

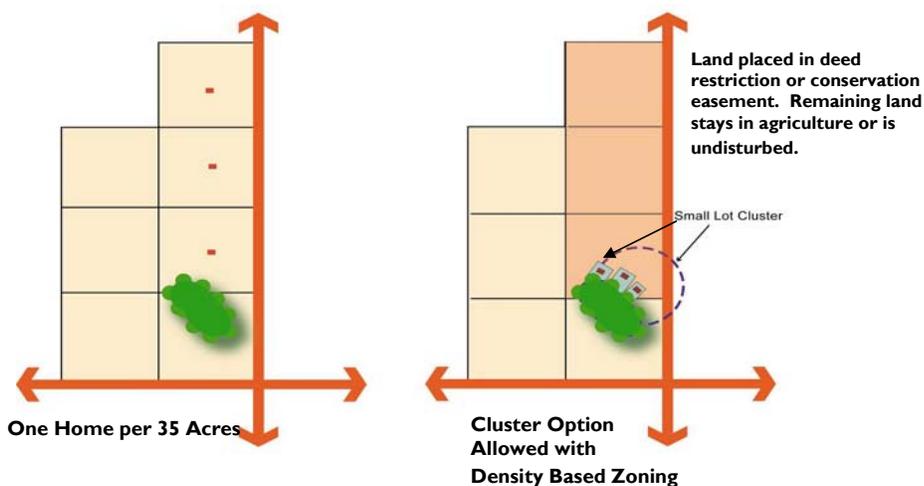
b. These plans should include recommendations on street patterns, soils, drainage, design guidelines, and other information deemed appropriate by local officials. Plan maps should indicate the relationship of the site to surrounding features, including transportation corridors, bike/pedestrian trails, public facilities, railroads, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, viewsheds, historic sites, and adjacent and surrounding land uses.

c. Such plans should also include a public involvement process to ensure community support. Such plans shall be adopted as part of the local Comprehensive Plan to ease in the implementation of development in planned areas. Local Comprehensive Plans should indicate development areas in which such studies should occur.



d. The above figure is a conceptual neighborhood plan showing land use, street network, and other connections to provide more detailed development guidelines for targeted development areas.

2. Create a Density-Based Zoning Program. A density-based zoning program provides flexibility in the zoning code. Such a program provides landowners an option to create lots smaller than the 35-acre minimum in agricultural preservation areas without increasing the net density of development. In simple terms, such a program can be considered the “mechanics” to allow for clustered housing. Benefits of this type of zoning include a possible reduction in land consumption (if lots are grouped together) and reducing the cost per lot for infrastructure. In return for developing smaller lots, property owners are required to place the remaining property under a non-development easement. In developing this program, the County and participating communities will have to consider several key issues including a.) calculation methods for the number of lots; b.) standards for deed restrictions; and c.) definition of the maximum number of lots that could be clustered.



3. Measuring the Fiscal Impact of Development. While new development will bring new tax revenues to communities, it will also create municipal costs to serve the development. The ratio of service costs to tax revenue is one key factor in determining the overall fiscal impact of development. Communities across Wisconsin are increasingly reviewing fiscal impact as part of the approval process for new developments. This is increasingly common for new commercial, industrial, and mixed use projects. To implement, codes such as zoning, land division, or other ordinances (e.g. “Big Box” Ordinances) should include provisions requiring such a fiscal or economic impact study be submitted. Upon being approved as part of the development review process, developers shall be required to either prepare or fund an independent fiscal or economic impact study per the municipality’s requirements.

4. Explore a County-Wide Purchase of Development Rights Program. Research is ongoing to establish the feasibility of a County-wide PDR Program. This program would provide funding for acquisition of development rights through environmental easements. Program funding amounts to finance the PDR should be determined by a committee, including possible County levies or grant preparation. Criteria for selection of PDR-eligible properties should also be determined in addition to quantifying support for development of the program by potential development rights sellers. Specific program parameters should be developed and approved through referendum before being implemented.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.03(6)(a)5.

5. Development Review Guidelines.

a. The purpose of the proposed guidelines is to identify points at which local and County plans will need to be reviewed and updated. These plans have been created, in part, to reflect anticipated growth.

b. If proposed development projects exceed these guidelines, communities shall review and amend their plans. This is done to ensure all planning documents are providing sufficient guidance to residents, property owners, staff, and officials. The County shall not approve development proposals that exceed these guidelines prior to plan amendments being adopted. Such amendments shall address considerations for use, location, form, and timing of the proposed development.

c. These projections are intended to last 10 years from the date of plan adoption.

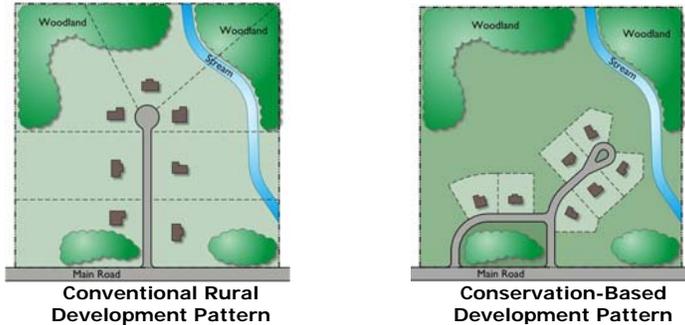
**Table 1: Plan Review "Guidelines" in Acres**

Town	Residential Acres	Non/Residential Acres	Total Acres
Bangor	120	80	200
Barre	160	40	200
Burns	280	40	320
Campbell	*	*	*
Farmington	400	40	440
Greenfield	240	40	280
Hamilton	520	40	560
Holland	620	140	760
Medary	320	40	360
Onalaska	840	120	960
Shelby	560	40	600
Washington	80	40	120

\* As Campbell has a very limited supply of undeveloped land, guidelines for new growth have not been recommended.

(b) Form and Character. The quality and desirability of development is determined not just by its use and intensity, but also the form and character it takes. The following section provides general design guidelines for development in La Crosse County.

1. Conservation Design Principles. This Plan recommends the use of cluster/conservation subdivision design and other similar existing models in the potential development of future County land use controls. The following guidelines should be considered in evaluating development. Municipalities are strongly encouraged to adopt more specific standards.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.03(6)(b)2.

2. Upon the adoption of standards by local communities, new development in designated areas shall be required to meet local standards and the following guidelines:

- a. "Hide" development from main roads through natural vegetation & topography.
- b. Provide vegetative buffers between building sites and sensitive environmental areas.
- c. Preserve mature trees, vegetation, and other attributes that relate to the site's historical or natural character.
- d. Prohibit or limit the placement of homes and buildings on exposed bluffs or ridge lines.
- e. Create an interconnected network of streets and trails with connections to the larger community.
- f. Integrate natural resources into the subdivision design as aesthetic and conservation landscape elements.
- g. Restore degraded environmental areas within the subdivisions, such as streams and wetlands.
- h. Encourage Best Management Practices (BMPs) for stormwater management, as opposed to conventional engineering strategies. Typical BMPs include overland transfer, natural landscaping to increase infiltration and reduce runoff, bio-infiltration systems, residential roof runoff directed to pervious yard areas, and maximum impervious surface ratios for development sites.
- i. Provide wide areas for public access to parks and common open spaces.
- j. Maximize preservation of common open space in the neighborhood through public dedication and/or private management of open space.

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3. Bluff Design Guidelines. The following are proposed to guide development decisions within the County's bluffs. The intent of these guidelines is to prohibit growth inconsistent with local codes and to minimize the visual impact of other growth that may be feasible. Municipalities are strongly encouraged to adopt specific standards as part of local plans, viewshed ordinances, or overlay zoning districts. Upon the adoption of standards by local communities, new development in designated areas shall meet local standards and the following guidelines:

- a. Land use patterns and site designs shall preserve the hillsides, scenic vistas, woodlands, wildlife habitat, and associated rare features found in the Coulee Region.
- b. Minimize exotic landscaping including the size of building footprints, and the amount of impervious surface devoted to roadways to the extent feasible. Allow the natural landscape to dominate.
- c. Nestle structures in valleys or below ridgelines and within the folds of the hills.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.03(6)(b)3.d.

d. Prohibit ridge top "sky lining" that alters the natural land profiles with built structures. Limit the visual impact of any new development that can legally be constructed.

e. Cluster development in a manner so as to maximize visually significant, unfragmented woodlands and open spaces.

f. Design buildings on hillsides to follow the natural terrain in a manner that minimizes earth disturbance.

g. Construct fences that are wildlife-friendly including efforts to minimize the areas fenced and the length of fences, using fence designs which exclude or discourage only certain types of wildlife, and providing exits and corridors for wildlife.

h. Place all utilities underground.

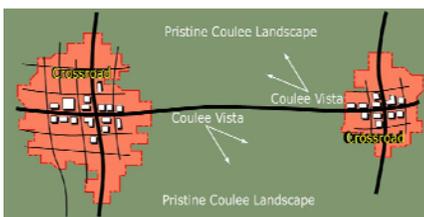
i. Restrict or shield lighting so as to restrict horizontal and vertical light spillover, thereby preserving the dark night sky.

4. Establish Design Corridors.

a. The appearance of the County's highway corridors is an important design consideration. This Plan strongly recommends that local communities develop design standards for highway commercial clusters that will control unlimited highway access points and discourage the proliferation of strip-styled commercial development. Although the highways and interstates are subject to general state and federal controls, these controls do not regulate the quality of development. Local and County guidelines are necessary to help ensure aesthetic and character concerns. Design guidelines can be implemented through local plans, intergovernmental agreements, and formal zoning "overlay districts" made specific to design corridors.

b. Due to their views, existing conditions, and susceptibility to growth, the following study areas should be considered:

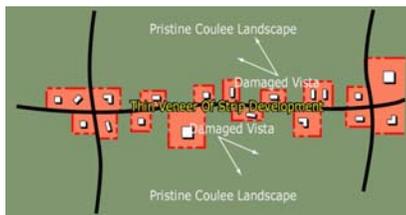
- i. Great River Road Corridor
- ii. Highway 16 - Between West Salem and Onalaska
- iii. Highway 16 - Between Bangor and West Salem
- iv. I-90 corridor



**General Highway Design Concepts**  
From "Coulee Visions" Report.

**Preferred Concept.** Design and development guidelines preserve scenic vistas and limit unplanned "strip" development between communities.

**Undesired Concept.** A thin veneer of unplanned strip development blurs the boundaries of communities and disturbs rural views.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.04

31.04 LA CROSSE COUNTY RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES. Introduction. The *La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan* must include a compilation of policies and recommendations to guide decision-making on a variety of topics. The following recommendations and policies were established to enhance or improve existing conditions identified in the Issues, Vision, and Goals chapter. This element includes recommendations and policies for six comprehensive planning elements. Recommendations and policies for the Land Use element are contained within a separate chapter of this plan. The Implementation Element is also a separate chapter in this plan that contains implementation strategies, responsibilities for completion, and timelines for completion to achieve selected recommendations identified in this chapter.

(1) Housing.

(a) Recommendations and Policies.

1. The Housing Element of a comprehensive plan provides direction to ensure an adequate supply of housing is available for existing and forecasted housing demand. For the purposes of the La Crosse County plan, the element includes policies that local governmental units should explore to promote the development of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels, all age groups, and all persons with special needs. Additionally, this element provides policies to promote the availability and proper use of land for the development or redevelopment of housing within its jurisdiction.

2. Recommendations were developed through the public participation process, review of current housing-related goals, and through review from the La Crosse County Housing Commission.

(b) General Housing Policy. La Crosse County will encourage local communities to provide an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels, age groups, and levels of ability. Housing redevelopment is encouraged where existing infrastructure is available and redevelopment complements the existing neighborhood aesthetic. Public-private partnerships, cost-sharing, integration of low-cost housing, and other policies to promote housing development that is low-impact and democratically approved will be encouraged.

(c) Recommendations (numerical listing for reference purposes only, ordering does not suggest order of importance):

1. Promote innovative housing techniques (PUD, clustering, accessory apartments) with adequate controls to safeguard existing communities.

2. Promote a balance of affordable housing opportunities in all parts of the county including rental units. Consider reinvestment programming that allows residents in affordable neighborhoods to stay in their neighborhoods.

3. Provide assistance to affordable housing and senior housing developments that adaptively reuse existing non-residential buildings by utilizing small scale or infill sites in order to minimize environmental impacts.

4. Link existing and future low- and moderate-income communities with existing and emerging employment centers through improved transit connections, improved bicycle facilities, and the creation of safe pedestrian corridors.

5. Support the La Crosse County Housing Commission in working with municipalities and other organizations in achieving short- and long-term goals related to the creation of affordable housing.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.04(1)(c)6.

6. Make tax delinquent lands available at below market rate prices to not-for-profit housing providers as sites for affordable housing that will return to the tax roll.

7. Work with local advocacy agencies to enhance the ability of special needs population's to stay in their homes through appropriate upgrades and retrofits to enable safe habitation, ingress and egress, and maintenance of owner-occupied housing.

8. Encourage municipalities to provide density bonuses or other incentives including reductions in land costs, grant assistance, favorable financing or fast track approvals to developers of market rate housing who provide some affordable units.

9. Encourage municipalities to enact zoning amendments to protect neighborhood scale and community character where a distinct housing type or traditional pattern of residential development exists, including appropriate height, bulk and setback regulations.

10. Foster the establishment of regulations that enhance protection of historic resources, including design guidelines and viewshed protection requirements. The objective for new development would be to harmonize with the historical built form of these communities and overall community character, rather than requiring a particular architectural style.

11. Encourage municipalities to require the use of Best Management Practices and erosion control and stormwater management plans for residential proposals that could potentially impact nearby waterways or ground water resources.

12. Direct new non-farm development to sites that would not adversely affect the operation of working lands. Similarly, new non-farm residential development should be tied to stringent deed restrictions or other recorded mutual agreement.

13. Discourage the development of major subdivisions (defined as five or more lots) unless served by public water and sanitary sewer service.

14. Encourage integrated mixed-income and mixed-use neighborhood developments that provide an array of home sizes and prices.

15. Rewrite "Agricultural District A" in the La Crosse County Zoning Code. It is substantially similar to the "Residential A" district and should be differentiated as an agricultural district that enables some housing and small farms, such as hobby farms or community supported agricultural operations, on fewer than 40-acres.

(2) Transportation.

(a) Recommendations and Policies. The purpose of this Transportation Element is to offer policies and recommendations to guide the future development of various modes of transportation and facilities development opportunities in La Crosse County. Content for this element was determined through the public participation process, review of current transportation goals, comments by the LAPC, and included review of the following documents and plans:

1. La Crosse County Land Development Plan (1999)
2. 2006-2007 LAPC Work Program
3. Port of La Crosse Harbor Plan (1999)

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.04(2)(b)

(b) General Transportation Policy. Future transportation plans, coordinated by local jurisdictions, La Crosse County, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, and the State of Wisconsin should consider all modes of transportation including highway, rail, water, air, mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel. Special attention should be paid to the mass transit needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities. Opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation such as in cost-sharing and grant preparation (through SAFETEA-LU), and in land use planning for dedication of transportation facilities will be encouraged.

(c) Recommendations (numerical listing for reference purposes only, ordering does not suggest order of importance)

1. Support and assist the work of the LAPC and TCC in developing regional cooperation to provide the most cost effective public transportation county wide.

2. Encourage cooperative transportation efforts. These may include:

a. Discussions between the City of La Crosse and surrounding communities to seek ways to expand the mass transit utility service area;

b. Support for the efforts of the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities to enable the development of Regional Transit Authorities (RTA);

c. Encouraging cooperative efforts to further build upon a countywide bicycle-pedestrian trail system that provides safe and efficient routes to interconnect all incorporated cities and villages in La Crosse County;

d. Encouraging transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and municipal comprehensive plans.

3. Encourage further building on La Crosse County's strong recreational trail system. In cooperation with rail transportation owners and Wisconsin Department of Transportation, preserve abandoned rail corridors for future recreational trails. Work with the LAPC to help communities obtain federal funding for non-automobile modes through SAFETEA-LU.

4. Continue to operate and improve on para-transit services that serve the elderly and disabled. Seek ways to integrate transportation services to meet the needs of transit dependent individuals and welfare-to-work programs.

5. Encourage and promote the development of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative which would service the City of La Crosse on the main line.

6. Continue on an annual basis to review and upgrade the highways under the county's jurisdiction based on safety, level of service, and pavement condition criteria. Maintain consistent monitoring and recording of the county highway system (through WISLR and others) to identify, reduce, and minimize deficiencies in the system. Implement the recommendations in the Comprehensive County Road Maintenance and Replacement Study.

7. Participate in the LAPC's La Crosse Corridor Transportation Study and remain active in discussions about the reconstruction of the I-90 Dresbach Bridge (scheduled for 2013-2015).

8. Ensure the La Crosse Municipal Airport continues to serve the general aviation and air commuting needs of the community for the foreseeable future, and support realistic plans for regional service.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.04(2)(c)9.

9. Support and encourage the recommendations of the Port of La Crosse Harbor Plan (1999) which seeks to increase the safety and usability of the Port of La Crosse for all users - personal and commercial.

10. Ensure provisions are made for safe movement, in the most expeditious manner, of people and goods from place to place throughout the county.

a. All existing roads which serve as collector routes and have a pavement width less than 24 feet should be improved with shoulders at least three feet in width, where practical.

b. Rail crossings in the urban area should be grade separated where practical.

c. Street name signs should be constructed and maintained at every intersection throughout the county.

11. Improve development review to ensure that all private and public development is undertaken in a manner which minimizes increased traffic congestion and land use conflicts.

a. Adjacent developments shall provide for internal circulation between them.

b. All residential developments of more than 10 lots should be served by an interior street system.

c. Increased building setbacks and more stringent sign controls on arterial and collector streets should be required.

d. Traffic calming techniques should be included in all new developments, where appropriate.

e. Road development and new driveway accesses on active agricultural land should be limited to the fullest extent possible. When new roads are required, minimize the use of dead end roads and cul-de-sacs whenever possible. New driveways shall continue to be regulated to ensure sufficient emergency vehicle access and to maintain safe driveway spacing standards.

f. Minimize creation of smaller remnant parcels or the division of continuous active agricultural parcels in the planning and construction of highway improvements.

g. Require traffic impact studies on a case-by-case basis as deemed appropriate by the Planning, Resources & Development Committee.

12. Require developments to provide appropriate areas for future transit and transportation facilities. Promote "Transit Ready" development that promotes the reservation of transit routes that will develop when densities and total population numbers can support increased transit networks.

(3) Utilities and Community Facilities.

(a) Recommendations and Policies. The purpose of this Utilities and Community Facilities Element is to offer policies and recommendations to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in La Crosse County. This element of the countywide plan is much more general than local municipal plans and will not include an in-depth analysis of local utilities or community facilities. Instead, it will discuss issues of regional importance such as ground water, transmission line corridors, equitable distribution of public services, and other issues within the purview of county government. Content for this element was determined through the public participation process, review of current goals, and included review of the following documents and plans:

1. La Crosse County Land Development Plan (1999)
2. La Crosse Sewer Service Area Water Quality Management Report 1999-2020

(b) General Utilities and Community Facilities Policy. To provide for the sustainability of future countywide development by ensuring capacity for urban and rural uses and densities, La Crosse County will:

1. Encourage utility and facility resource sharing that fairly distributes and compensates all cities, villages, and towns for past, present, and future investments in public services;
2. Protect environmental resources in the development of utilities and community facilities;
3. Work to develop and implement the recommendations of adopted plans related to sewer, water, power, and recreation facility development;
4. Identify programs, funding, and partnering to identify and develop renewable energy resources and distribution capabilities;
5. Direct public investments in new or expanded community facilities toward meeting the long range needs of the county overall.

(c) Recommendations (numerical listing for reference purposes only, ordering does not suggest order of importance)

1. Encourage the municipalities of La Crosse County to provide for the public recreation needs of all segments of the population.
  - a. Undertake an inventory and long range needs assessment for new facilities and linkages to existing facilities in a countywide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP).
  - b. Ensure recreation and park space is made available as a required part of urban density development.
  - c. Encourage combining school and recreation facilities to provide mutual benefits of service, safety, convenience and economy.
  - d. Incorporate scenic areas and viewsheds in La Crosse County into a system of protected open spaces, scenic trails and parks.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.04(3)(c)1.e

e. Promote diverse and continuing educational opportunities, a variety of cultural and entertainment options, and convention and tourism opportunities.

2. Protect groundwater resources, distribution systems, recharge areas, and wellheads from contamination, degradation, and overdevelopment.

a. Monitor the results of the County Groundwater Modeling Study which was completed in 2004 to identify ways to prevent further groundwater contamination, identify appropriate locations for new wells, and make more efficient and economical use of existing wells.

b. Encourage wellhead protection ordinances for new municipal wells that are developed within the county.

c. Encourage monitoring of wells for naturally or unnaturally occurring contamination (arsenic, pesticides, etc.).

d. Encourage personal accountability in water usage by promoting conservation fixtures in new construction, development of rain gardens, and preservation of groundwater recharge areas such as wetlands.

3. Work with La Crosse County's Solid Waste Policy Board to implement recommendations of the Solid Waste Management Plan. The plan seeks to strengthen service relationships and properly manage solid waste disposal within the region. Ensure that landfill areas are zoned properly and ensure appropriate buffer areas of either industrial uses or green spaces.

4. Continue to maintain the nonproliferation of additional treatment facilities but recognize that connection to an existing treatment facility is not always cost-effective or environmentally sound and that there may be instances where a small sewage treatment facility is the most effective solution. Follow recommendations contained in the La Crosse Sewer Service Area Water Quality Management Report 1999-2020.

5. Require site plans and density guidelines (dwelling units per acre) before approval of municipal sewer extensions to residential subdivisions. Promote incorporation of adequate open space with pervious surface areas to help control stormwater in an environmentally sound and natural manner.

6. Recommend the municipalities of La Crosse County seek equitable and acceptable ways to distribute the costs and benefits of public services and facilities between the private and public sectors.

7. Implement a public engagement process to include early and continuous public involvement when siting new public facilities. New facilities shall conform to local siting requirements and if they are projected to generate substantial travel demand, every effort will be made to site facilities along or near major transportation and public transit corridors.

8. Initiate a countywide stormwater management program. The program should require the following elements:

a. Require large private well owners to conduct regular aquifer testing and conform to standard reporting requirements;

b. Encourage municipalities in their reviews of proposals by large water users to require appropriate discharge of water back into the local aquifer;

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.04(3)(c)8.c.

c. Promote and/or require the use of retention basins and other methods of water resources management to reduce the impacts of outdoor water use practices which do not incorporate Best Management Practices.

d. Develop a countywide stormwater management ordinance.

9. Ensure adequate utility and communication infrastructure throughout the region. Work with local and state entities to monitor existing supplies and forecast future demand to provide sufficient delivery for a variety of consumers. Protect residents from major line development through the county that does not benefit La Crosse County users.

10. Encourage major energy consumers to participate in renewable energy programs through the State of Wisconsin and participating utility companies. Promote participation in programs available for development and implementation of solar, wind, hydro, biogas, or other renewable resources.

11. Encourage participation of agricultural operations in energy-conserving programs.

12. Require La Crosse County and encourage other jurisdictions to meet or exceed the same standards as state buildings under the Energy Efficiency and Renewables Act (2006) which aims to increase the use of renewable energy and improve energy efficiency programs in state buildings in Wisconsin.

13. Adopt the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards in the planning, design, construction, and commissioning of county facilities financed by La Crosse County.

14. Examine Wisconsin's Solar and Wind Access Law and determine if additional standards need to be determined in a countywide ordinance to encourage development of solar and wind energy sources.

15. Follow the steps outlined through the US Environmental Protection Agency to ensure La Crosse County becomes a more sustainable "Green Community."

(4) Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources.

(a) Recommendations and Policies. The purpose of this Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element is to offer policies and recommendations to guide the future conservation, promotion, and effective management of natural, cultural, and agricultural resources in La Crosse County. Content for this element was determined through the public participation process, review of current goals, and included review of the following documents and plans:

1. La Crosse County Land Development Plan (1999)
2. La Crosse County Farmland Preservation Plan (1980)

(b) General Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Policy. La Crosse County will require municipalities to utilize county resource protection ordinances and encourage municipalities to develop stricter policies where warranted. Local preparation of special studies, maps, or monitoring strategies to protect agricultural, natural, and cultural resources will be encouraged and enabled to the ability of county government. When possible, the county will assist in directing local governments to appropriate opportunities, personnel, or special interest groups to further resource preservation goals as stated in their local comprehensive land use plans.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.04(4)(c)

(c) Recommendations (numerical listing for reference purposes only, ordering does not suggest order of importance):

1. Identify and map environmentally sensitive areas and investigate the cost and benefits of undertaking floodplain mapping where no floodplain boundary mapping was conducted (creeks, etc.).

2. Encourage all municipalities in the county to develop and enforce stormwater management plans that are similar to or more restrictive than the county's ordinance to reduce runoff to surface waters, and to identify treatment options.

3. Take actions to make the surface waters of the county safe for whole body contact recreation and attain their fishing potential. Implement existing plans such as the La Crosse County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Bad Axe-La Crosse Water Quality Management Plan.

4. Continue to test and monitor on a regular basis La Crosse County surface waters. These waters are both a natural resource asset and economic asset. Continue to promote and enforce construction setbacks from all waterways to prevent erosion into and siltation of surface waters.

5. Develop a conservancy district as part of the La Crosse County Zoning Ordinance. Its purpose would be to protect areas of environmental significance, natural resources, or open space significance. A conservancy district could provide a tool to private landowners who wish to protect such areas.

6. Keep the La Crosse County Zoning and Planning Department, in cooperation with UW-Extension, current on the tax relief implications of the Farmland Preservation Program for county farmers and provide assistance as necessary.

7. Update the County's Farmland Preservation Plan.

8. Explore the costs and benefits of initiating a voluntary countywide purchase of the development rights (PDR) program as an option for farmland preservation.

9. Encourage participation in agricultural programming through the State of Wisconsin such as the Working Lands Enterprise Areas (WLEA) program and Beginning Farmer and Logger Programs. These programs would help to maintain active agriculture in La Crosse County by identifying agricultural zones and supplying a new workforce for continued agricultural production.

10. Explore developing non-agricultural development density standards. Under this program, density is increased in incorporated areas thereby reducing the amount of land needed for non-farm development. Benefits to this approach include reduced pollution (stormwater, etc.) and more efficient development patterns that lower government expenses. La Crosse County should work with all governments within the county to develop intergovernmental agreements that would enable this program to succeed.

11. Encourage local historic societies and other organizations to preserve and promote historic places throughout La Crosse County. This would include assisting with the preparation of grant applications, possible mapping assistance, and referrals to educational programming through UW-Extension or other agencies. Create a map and database of historical and archaeological sites within the County's geographic information system.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.04(4)(c)12.

12. Work with local communities to identify archaeological sites and require deed restrictions and disturbance limitations to protect the archaeological significance of the site.

13. Establish soil capability guidelines for development on agricultural lands. Prime farm soils (types 1 and 2) should be protected whenever possible. Protections may include determining maximum percentages of acreage that can be disturbed on soils identified as prime.

14. Develop guidelines for "Conservation Subdivision Design" (CSD) development within the subdivision code. Ensure wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes, in addition to a large portion of the flat, dry, and otherwise buildable land are set aside from clearing, grading, and construction. Explore developer incentives such as density bonuses for developers who pursue these types of development.

15. Encourage the development of Cost of Community Services (COCS) studies to determine the fiscal impact of existing local land uses. These studies evaluate working and open lands on equal ground with residential, commercial and industrial land uses.

16. Extinguish the "Agricultural Transition" district from the Zoning Code. Rezone lands zoned "Agricultural Transition" to the preferred zoning district as identified on an adopted comprehensive land use plan or as "Exclusive Agricultural" district where not otherwise identified.

17. Encourage farmers to participate in renewable energy programming. Work with public and private entities to educate agricultural producers about grants and other assistance available for planning and development of renewable energy resources.

18. Encourage uniformity testing for irrigation systems within La Crosse County every 3 to 5 years in an effort to help determine if water distributed by the irrigation system is being applied uniformly to the soil surface.

19. Encourage pump testing in rural areas every 2 years. Periodic testing will identify problems in the water system, help prevent cavitation, and ensure sufficient water is available for residential and agricultural use.

20. Explore policies to protect groundwater resources in La Crosse County from non-resident users, or business entities that exist to harvest groundwater resources without returning water back to the local aquifer.

(5) Economic Development.

(a) Recommendations and Policies. The purpose of this Economic Development Element is to offer policies and recommendations to stabilize, retain, and expand the economic base and build quality employment opportunities in La Crosse County. Content for this element was determined through the public participation process, review of current economic development goals, and included review of the following documents and plans:

1. La Crosse County Land Development Plan (1999)
2. Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2003, 2006

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.04(5)(a)3.

3. Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission Industry Cluster and Regional Trade Report (2001)

Additional economic development plans exist that promote specific business sector growth. Such plans also include strategic employment plans by large companies or quasi-public institutions (hospitals, etc.). These plans were kept in mind when policies and recommendations were developed but are not specifically mentioned.

(b) General Economic Development Policy. Economic development will be encouraged that:

1. does not adversely impact the natural or already built environment;
2. is consistent with community values stated in local comprehensive plans;
3. encourages development that provides jobs to county residents;
4. addresses unemployment in the county and seeks innovative techniques to attract different industries for a more diversified economic base;
5. utilizes existing community infrastructure and sustainable inputs;
6. promotes reinvestment in the local economy and educational system;
7. supports retention and expansion of existing businesses; and
8. enhances La Crosse County's position as an economic, cultural, employment, and tourism center for region.

(c) Recommendations (numerical listing for reference purposes only, ordering does not suggest order of importance)

1. Strive to increase the amount of revolving loan funds available through federal, state, and other outside sources in order to help more businesses grow and prosper in La Crosse County. Encourage funds be used for business start-up, recruitment and retention and to promote the natural beauty, community services, educational opportunity, and other quality of life measures that help to sustain and attract a productive workforce.

2. Encourage building of community identity by developing and enforcing design standards. Encourage local initiatives such as design corridors, business improvement districts, or historic district designation to focus attention and resources on downtown revitalization.

3. Encourage new business and industry to locate in communities where a full range of public services such as water, sewer, police and fire protection, education facilities, and transportation service can be economically provided. Encourage investment opportunities in communities with sufficient governmental structure, infrastructure capacity, and development potential.

4. Enhance opportunities to further build the county's industry base through integration with technology-based industry clusters that drive the state's economy and through actions that facilitate increased intraregional trade. Encourage economic expansion and employment opportunities that build upon the diversity of the county's economy through strengthening the county position as a regional distribution, manufacturing, health, technology, tourism and service center.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.04(5)(c)5.

5. Encourage the provision of an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each La Crosse County community. Explore collaborative initiatives for workforce housing with large employers in the area to promote home ownership opportunities.

6. Direct job-creating economic investments to distressed places. These investments would be intended to relieve concentrations of long-term unemployed persons including minorities, developmentally disabled, and the aging and to encourage the redevelopment of land and buildings for new job creation.

7. Continue to explore agricultural programming to enable an active farm economy within La Crosse County. Examples include a purchase of development rights (PDR) program that reserves agricultural land in perpetuity through conservation easements. Promote secondary agriculture-related industries to process and support agricultural production.

8. Support the state's education and training infrastructure so that every adult in the state can become an employable worker. Continue to aid and support educational programming to prepare La Crosse County's labor force for success in an ever changing economic landscape. Encourage programming for apprenticeships to grow skilled trades, and technical training to prepare workers for knowledge-based industries. Work to increase capacity of a new generation of workers to replace a retiring workforce.

9. Encourage municipalities to adopt zoning that permits higher-density, mixed uses in downtowns and around transportation hubs that once served the entire County, but now compete with highway commerce. Encourage pedestrian-friendly, transit, and transportation-ready designs in urban areas to differentiate them from traditional highway development.

10. Encourage new business development and expansion that provides "family wage" jobs and a strong tax base.

11. Encourage municipalities in La Crosse County to provide sufficient land supply for industrial growth and development and to provide adequate buffers between these and other uses. Reservation of buffers with appropriate land uses and zoning provisions will ensure they will be available for future use. Ensure industrial land designations are sufficient to permit the concentration of industry in appropriate locations beyond 20 years. The designation of this land shall be established in a way that preserves natural resource based industries (quarrying, forestry, etc.) and other critical areas.

12. Encourage opportunities to enable family businesses, cottage industries, home-based occupations, and agricultural-related businesses.

13. Promote and utilize sustainable energy resources as an economic opportunity and encourage increased development of alternative energy markets and businesses.

14. Promote sustainable development, energy conservation, and green building techniques.

(6) Intergovernmental Cooperation.

(a) Recommendations and Policies. This Intergovernmental Cooperation Element is an essential component of any comprehensive plan. Within this element the relationships between public, quasi-public, and private entities are discussed to increase the efficiencies and capabilities of each entity to provide service and support throughout La Crosse County. The following policies and recommendations have been developed to guide the future development of various cooperative practices and agreements.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.04(6)(b)

(b) General Intergovernmental Cooperation Policy. It is the County's policy to participate in intergovernmental coordination efforts with federal, state, and local governments. La Crosse County will support intergovernmental and private sector coordination to ensure:

1. Economic development in conformance with comprehensive planning policy;

2. Reduction of dependence on county resources for needed services;

3. Increased accountability and responsiveness to regional and County-wide needs;

4. Increased efficiencies in the delivery of services;

5. The integrity of the land-use policies of any County comprehensive plan element is preserved;

6. The responsibility and support for land use planning will be coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions through the adoption of local comprehensive plans and other planning agreements which will recognize:

a. That the County will maintain planning oversight through the comprehensive plan in unincorporated areas until and during any jurisdictional transition;

b. The County will support the planning process for unincorporated areas and establish and participate in a cooperative process to address the future of urban service provision issues.

7. La Crosse County will continue to encourage the development of cooperative boundary agreements between municipalities.

8. County resources are used to leverage other resources for the encouragement of economically viable agricultural and forest areas, for habitat conservation and stabilizing rural areas. These initiatives could include:

a. Joint development of marketing facilities for agricultural products, such as wholesale and farmers' markets;

b. Support for programs which conserve wildlife habitat, particularly wetlands, through private/public cooperation;

c. The encouragement of incentive programs or other compensatory mechanisms for the preservation of working lands, especially the purchase of conservation easements.

(c) Recommendations (numerical listing for reference purposes only, ordering does not suggest order of importance):

1. Prior to actions on rezoning of lands the county zoning committee will take under advisement the recommendations provided in the town plans as well as any plans prepared by cities or villages for the purpose of seeking coordinated and compatible growth.

2. Encourage cooperation and coordination on provision of emergency services with local and regional units of government.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.04(5)(c)3.

3. Cooperate and seek ways to cost share and resource pool with other local governments in meeting the State of Wisconsin's comprehensive planning requirements for implementation, updates, and rewrites.

4. Encourage all municipalities in the county to develop and enforce erosion control, stormwater management, and groundwater recharge plans that are similar or more restrictive than County ordinances.

5. Encourage cooperative efforts between the City of La Crosse and surrounding communities to seek ways to expand the mass transit utility service area.

6. Initiate efforts to consolidate services between governments and quasi-public entities. Discuss the importance of cost-effective and efficient delivery of services throughout La Crosse County communities. Enlist involvement with other agencies (TCC, LAPC, UWEX, etc.) to educate the public about consolidation and cost-sharing.

7. Consider developing a countywide cost of community services study (COCS) to identify and compare the differential between land uses and the amount, and cost, of services they require. Solicit involvement and disseminate results with local community stakeholders.

31.05 LA CROSSE COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT.

(1) Introduction. The *La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan* establishes a framework for a wide variety of public decisions affecting growth, development, community character, and public expenditures. This element of the plan consolidates opportunities and direction for La Crosse County over the next twenty years. It includes a synopsis of previously completed planning components (Citizen Participation Process, Plan Goals, etc.) and concludes with a strategic action plan that prioritizes recommendations to achieve planning goals. The element also includes information about evaluating, amending, and updating this plan to ensure consistency with other planning documents, and to keep the plan current and relevant over time.

(2) Citizen Participation Process.

(a) The main purpose of the public participation process was to make all citizens of La Crosse County aware of the progress of the countywide comprehensive plan and to offer the public opportunities to make suggestions or comments during the process. Taken individually, the activities undertaken during the preparation of this plan were not expected to reach and inform each and every resident of La Crosse County. Collectively, however, the plan activities were designed to effectively and efficiently provide a broad-based dissemination of information and maximize the opportunity for citizen involvement and comment. Public meetings, workshops, and open houses provided opportunities for the public to openly discuss comprehensive planning issues with local decision makers, county staff, and the hired planning consultant. Formal public hearings were also conducted as part of the plan adoption process to allow public testimony to be made regarding the *La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan*. During plan development, every effort was made to ensure that public meetings were held at one or more public locations central and convenient to all citizens of La Crosse County.

(b) The following is a list of objectives for public participation that La Crosse County sought to achieve throughout the development of the *La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan*. These same objectives apply for implementation strategies.

1. All residents of La Crosse County become fully aware of the importance of participating in the development of the Plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.05(2)(b)2.

2. The public participation process is designed to engage people of all races, ethnic backgrounds and income levels.

3. The public has opportunities to provide their input (both formally and informally) to the county, their local Plan Commission and local governing body.

4. The public has access to all technical information and any analyses performed throughout the planning process.

5. Members of the county and participating municipalities have input from the broadest range of perspectives and interests in the community possible.

6. Input is elicited through a variety of means (electronic, printed, and oral) in such a way that it may be carefully considered and responded to in a timely fashion.

7. This process of public involvement strengthens the sense of community present in the municipalities of La Crosse County and furthers the vision of active and positive participation by all aspects of the community in the decision making and civic life of the municipality over the long term.

(c) Two of the major undertakings during this process included a series of sub-area meetings throughout the county, and a countywide survey. Descriptions and outcomes for portions of these exercises are detailed below:

1. Stakeholders.

a. Throughout development of this plan, there has been extensive citizen involvement. As described in the Introduction of the Existing Conditions Report, the county was divided into six (6) sub-areas so that completed elements of the comprehensive plan could be discussed with the public upon completion of key benchmarks in the process. These discussions included review of demographic projections, land use projections, and implementation tools. In all, elements of the comprehensive plan were presented in each sub-area on five different occasions.

b. In June and July 2007, sub-area meetings were held to discuss preferred implementation tools. Examples were divided into incentive based approaches ("carrots") or regulatory tools ("sticks"). Overall, incentives were thought to increase voluntary compliance but meeting participants realized some regulatory tools were also necessary. Many of those tools are represented in the next section of this Implementation Element. Results from all sub-area meetings were carried forward throughout plan development. See Appendix A.

c. Beyond citizen involvement, other stakeholder groups such as county boards and commissions, county staff, and other public or private entities were included in the development of recommendations to ensure implementation steps are realistic and practical.

d. The primary oversight committee involved in the development of the *La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan* was the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. This 14-member group was comprised of two co-chairs, six County Board members, and one representative from each of the six sub-areas. The Committee met monthly to review plan progress, deliverables, and outcomes.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.05(2)(c)2.

2. Survey. In October 2006 a random sample survey was distributed to 2,500 households in La Crosse County. In total, 344 responses were collected and tabulated (14% response rate). The survey sought to collect information about a variety of topics used to generate goals, objectives, and policies for the comprehensive plan. Overall, county survey respondents favored preservation of active agricultural lands, multimodal transportation facilities development, urban redevelopment, maintaining distinct urban boundaries, and maintaining county controls such as slope limitations. Respondents were not in favor of new billboards along highways, or altering community character. The survey identified a need for further education on topics such as conservation easements and cluster subdivision design. See Appendix B.

(3) Purpose.

(a) Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law (Wisconsin Statute Section 66.1001) requires the preparation of an Implementation Element as part of a nine-element comprehensive plan. The implementation plan needs to include:

*A compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs (in the plan).*

(b) The following section of this document begins with a listing of La Crosse County's vision, goals and objective statements. A series of potential implementation tools follows concluding with a section that discusses amending and adopting the plan.

(4) Vision. La Crosse County is a diverse and vibrant hub set amid the Upper Mississippi River and scenic coulees. Within this setting are valuable natural, agricultural, cultural, transportation, educational, and economic resources. These resources provide residents, businesses, and visitors distinct urban amenities and small-town livability. Preserving these resources and strengthening the connections between them is the foundation for maintaining and enhancing quality of life and economic opportunity.

(5) Comprehensive Plan Goals. Goals are statements that describe specific elements of the vision. These goals should be considered "guiding principles" for the plan, clearly outlining what should be accomplished. Realistic goals provide the framework for the development of attainable policies and actions. The goals are based on the existing goals from the La Crosse County 2020 Development Plan and have been updated from feedback gained at public meetings and from the County Steering Committee.

(a) Land Use and Growth Management Goal: Work in partnership with area communities to manage and guide future growth, recognizing that land is an irreplaceable resource. Enhance the quality of life by protecting both natural resources and farmland and by promoting urban infill and redevelopment. Guide growth to developed areas where public facilities and services can be economically provided.

(b) Farmland Preservation Goal: Direct growth away from prime farmland and protect productive agricultural operations from the encroachment of incompatible uses. Evaluate and utilize programs and initiatives that support this goal.

(c) Property Rights Goal: Utilize consistent policies and implementation tools that provide equity and fairness to landowners while preserving public health, welfare, and the community character.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.05(5)(d)

(d) Natural Resources Goal: Preserve and protect the overall beauty and natural resources of the county as these areas contribute to quality of life and are a critical component of the county's economic development strategy. Protect features including bluffs, coulees, wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, rivers, streams, woodlands, remnant prairies/grasslands, open spaces, and groundwater recharge areas.

(e) Air Quality Goal: Monitor air quality within the county and region to ensure both compliance with existing State and Federal laws, and to promote the exceeding of these standards.

(f) Groundwater Quality Goal: Pursue activities that maintain, protect, and enhance the county's high quality groundwater resources.

(g) Cultural Resources Goal: Preserve the artistic, cultural, historic, and archeological resources as these features add to the area's quality of life and its rich cultural heritage.

(h) Economic Development Goal: Seek a cooperative, intergovernmental approach to business retention and recruitment. Utilize strategies that capitalize on the county's existing assets, including its available workforce, transportation infrastructure, and the natural features that contribute to quality of life. Cooperate with other entities to improve the region's position as an attractive and competitive place to start, grow, and expand business.

(i) Transportation Goal: Promote a transportation system that creates safe, efficient, convenient, and economical options for residents and business users. Coordinate all transportation planning with its impact on land use and growth patterns. Address the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and disabled residents when planning for surface and non-surface transportation.

(j) Housing Goal: Ensure that the county has an available housing supply that is adequate, affordable, and well-maintained, which meets the needs of all income levels, ages, special-needs populations, and household types.

(k) Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal: Cooperate and communicate with all local, state and federal governments, adjacent counties, and regional organizations to provide county residents and businesses with timely information as well as efficient and economical services.

(l) Utilities and Community Facilities Goal: Maintain service and staffing levels appropriate for the varied urban, suburban, and rural community expectations. Promote intergovernmental efficiencies and improvements, including the use of renewable energy sources.

(m) Social and Community Service Goal: Ensure the region continues to offer quality, affordable, and efficient services to its residents through public and private providers. Maintain and enhance the quality of education, healthcare, childcare, and related services, which contribute to the quality of life of residents.

(6) Implementation Tools. Implementation Tools include the rules, policies, and ordinances used to facilitate or control for a desired outcome. Examples include zoning, subdivision, and official mapping, or the availability of certain incentives. This section includes both regulatory and non-regulatory measures.

(a) Regulatory Measures. For the purposes of this document, "regulatory measures" are those that must be adhered to by everyone if adopted. The following regulatory measures can be used to guide development and implement the recommendations of a comprehensive plan. These measures are officially adopted as ordinances (or as revisions to the existing ordinances). Some of the implementation tools are meant solely for use by municipalities within La Crosse County who may or may not choose to utilize these measures at their discretion with or without county assistance.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.05(6)(a)1.

1. Zoning Ordinance:

a. Zoning is used to guide and control the use of land and structures on land. In addition, zoning establishes detailed regulations concerning the areas of lots that may be developed, including setbacks and separation for structures, the density of the development, and the height and bulk of building and other structures. The general purpose for zoning is to avoid undesirable side effects of development by segregating incompatible uses and by maintaining adequate standards for individual uses.

b. The establishment of zoning districts is generally conducted after careful consideration of the development patterns indicated in the comprehensive plan. Amending zoning district boundaries has the overall effect of changing the plan (unless amendments correspond to changes within the plan), therefore, it is reasonable to assume that indiscriminate changes may result in weakening of the plan. The County Board makes the final decisions on the content of the zoning ordinance and the district map. These decisions are preceded by public hearings and recommendations of the Planning, Resources and Development Committee and participating unincorporated communities.

2. Shoreland Zoning: La Crosse County regulates shorelands within its jurisdiction. The shoreland zoning code sets standards to prevent water pollution, protect aquatic habitat, control building sites including placement of structures and land uses, and preserve natural shore cover.

3. Official Maps: An official map shows the location of areas which the municipality has identified as necessary for future public streets, recreation areas, and other public grounds. By showing the area on the Official Map, the municipality puts the property owner on notice that the property has been reserved for a future facility or purpose.

4. Sign Regulations: Local governments may adopt regulations, such as sign ordinances, to limit the height and other dimensional characteristics of advertising and identification signs. The purpose of these regulations is to promote the well-being of the community by establishing standards that assure the provision of signs adequate to meet essential communication needs while safeguarding the rights of the people in the community to a safe, healthful, and attractive environment.

5. Erosion/Stormwater Control Ordinances:

a. The purpose of stormwater or erosion control ordinances is to set forth requirements and criteria which will prevent and control water pollution, diminish the threats to public health, safety, welfare, and aquatic life due to runoff of stormwater from development or redevelopment. Adoption of local ordinances for stormwater do not pre-empt more stringent stormwater management requirements that may be imposed by WPDES Stormwater Permits issued by the Department of Natural Resources under Section 147.021 Wis, Stats.

b. La Crosse County's Erosion Control/Land Disturbance Code (Chapter 21) was established to protect the county's unique natural resources by minimizing the amount of sediment carried by runoff or discharged from land disturbance activities to perennial waters, wetlands, private properties, and public rights-of-way.

6. Building Codes: The Uniform Dwelling Code (UDC) is the statewide building code for one- and two-family dwellings built since June 1, 1980. As of January 1, 2005, there is enforcement of the UDC in all Wisconsin municipalities. The UDC is primarily enforced by municipal or county building inspectors who must be state-certified. In lieu of local enforcement, municipalities have the option to have the state provide enforcement through state-certified inspection agencies for new homes. Permit requirements for alterations and additions will vary by municipality. Regardless of permit requirements, state statutes require compliance with the UDC rules by owners and builders even if there is no enforcement.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.05(6)(a)7.

7. Mechanical Codes: In the State of Wisconsin, the 2000 International Mechanical Code (IMC) and 2000 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) have been adopted with Wisconsin amendments for application to commercial buildings.

8. Housing Codes: A description of the State Uniform Dwelling Code (UDC) is included above. The UDC applies to one- and two-family dwelling units built since June 1, 1980. Localities, however, can also institute additional housing codes that are local ordinances or laws requiring owners of real property to build and maintain properties to specific standards.

9. Sanitary Codes: The Wisconsin Sanitary Code (WSC), which is usually enforced at the county-level, provides local regulation for communities that do not have municipal sanitary service. The WSC establishes rules for the proper siting, design, installation, inspection and management of private sewage systems and non-plumbing sanitation systems. La Crosse County has adopted state plumbing and sanitation codes by reference in the Sanitation Code (Chapter 12).

10. Subdivision Ordinance:

a. Subdivision regulations serve as an important function by ensuring the orderly growth and development of unplatted and undeveloped land. These regulations are intended to protect the community and occupants of the proposed subdivision by setting forth reasonable regulations for public utilities, storm water drainage, lot sizes, street design, open space, or other improvements necessary to ensure that new development will be an asset to the county.

b. La Crosse County's Subdivision and Platting Code (Chapter 18) regulates and controls the division of land within the unincorporated areas of the county. The County Board makes the final decisions on the content of the subdivision ordinance. These decisions are preceded by public hearings and recommendations of the Planning, Resources and Development Committee.

(b) Innovative Approaches (Regulatory). Some regulatory implementation tools include innovative approaches for the management of land, resources, and economic development. The following tools are listed to explain and inform future decision making. *Some excerpts from 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, UW Extension, or other sources.*

1. Inclusionary Zoning: Zoning regulations that provide more housing choices by establishing requirements and providing incentives to build affordable housing in or near market rate housing developments. For example, communities may require that a certain percentage of a residential housing development be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

2. Landlord Licensing: Registration for rental properties, or landlord licensing, includes rules to register, monitor, and collect fees for rental properties. In many cases inspection is not required before a license is issued, but revocation of the license is common if the property that has been licensed is a repeat code violator.

3. Site Plan Regulations: A site plan is a detailed plan of a lot indicating all proposed improvements. Some communities have regulations indicating that site plans may need to be prepared by an engineer, surveyor, or architect. Additionally, site plan regulations may require specific inclusions such as: General Layout, Drainage and Grading, Utilities, Erosion Control, Landscaping & Lighting, and Building Elevations.

4. Archaeological Preservation Ordinances: The purpose of these ordinances is to preserve the archaeological resources within a geographic area and to ensure such resources are considered (and protected) if nearby lands are disturbed (for development or construction).

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.05(6)(b)5.

5. Design Review Ordinances and Downtown Overlay Districts: An overlay district is an additional zoning requirement that is placed on a geographic area but does not change the underlying zoning. Overlay districts have been used to impose development restrictions or special considerations on new development. The districts can be used to preserve historic, scenic or other priority areas. They are most often used to facilitate structural development with a common theme or element to create character or unique identity. The overlay district must be adopted as part of the zoning code by the County Board following appropriate public hearing procedures.

(c) Non-Regulatory Measures. For the purposes of this document, “non-regulatory measures” are meant to encourage a particular practice, but not legislate it. The following non-regulatory measures can be used to guide development and implement the recommendations of a comprehensive plan. These measures often exist as policies or as special incentives available to willing participants. Some of the implementation tools are meant solely for use by municipalities within La Crosse County who may or may not choose to utilize these measures at their discretion with or without county assistance.

1. Capital Improvement Plan:

a. This is an ongoing financial planning program intended to help implement planning proposals. The program allows local communities to plan for capital expenditures and minimize unplanned expenses. Capital improvements or expenditures are those projects that require the expenditure of public funds for the acquisition or construction of a needed physical facility.

b. Capital improvement programming is a listing of proposed projects according to a schedule of priorities over the next few years. It identifies needed public improvements, estimates their costs, discusses means of financing them, and establishes priorities for them over a three-to-five year programming period. Improvements or acquisitions considered a capital improvement include:

- i. Public buildings (i.e. – fire and police stations)
- ii. Park acquisition and development
- iii. Roads and highways
- iv. Utility construction and wastewater treatment plants
- v. Joint school and other community development projects
- vi. Fire and police protection equipment

c. A capital improvement plan or program is simply a method of financial planning for these types of improvements and scheduling the expenditures over a period of several years in order to maximize the use of public funds. In addition, each year the capital improvement program should be extended one year to compensate for the previous year that was completed. This keeps the improvement program current and can be modified to the community’s changing needs.

2. Expedited Review Process. This incentive provides a faster method of development review if certain criteria are met (e.g. increased design standards or preservation of unique lands). The process does not circumvent formal review or public comment, but increases the speed with which development proposals are reviewed if developers agree to voluntarily forward a community goal or objective that would not otherwise be required.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.05(6)(c)3.

3. Historic Preservation Ordinances.

a. An historic preservation ordinance is a voluntary code established to protect, enhance, and perpetuate buildings of special character or the special historic or aesthetic interest of districts that represent a community's cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history. The jurisdiction's governing body may create a landmarks commission to designate historic landmarks and establish historic districts.

b. In accordance with Wisconsin Statutes 101.121 and 44.44, a municipality (county, village, town or county) may request the State Historical Society of Wisconsin to certify a local historic preservation ordinance in order to establish a "certified municipal register of historic property" to qualify locally designated historic buildings for the Wisconsin Historic Building Code. The purpose of the Wisconsin Historic Building Code, which has been developed by the Department of Commerce, is to facilitate the preservation or restoration of designated historic buildings through the provision of alternative building standards. Owners of qualified historic buildings are permitted to elect to be subject to the Historic Building code in lieu of any other state or municipal building codes. Historic property is exempt from property tax under Sec. 70.11(34), Wis. Stats.

4. Main Street Programs: The Wisconsin Main Street Program is based on nationwide downtown revitalization methods developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program advocates the restoration of historic character of downtown while pursuing traditional development strategies such as marketing, business recruitment and retention, real estate development, market analysis, and public improvements. Funding is available through the Wisconsin Main Street Program for training and technical assistance.

(d) Innovative Approaches (Non-Regulatory). Some non-regulatory implementation tools include innovative approaches for the management of land, resources, and economic development. The following tools are listed to explain and inform future decision making. *Some excerpts from 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, UW Extension, or other sources.*

1. Density Bonus Ordinances: There are a number of "density bonuses" that a community may offer a developer to achieve a public policy goal. One density bonus permits developers to increase the number of units allowed on a piece of property if they agree to restrict the rents or sales prices on some of the units. Developers can use the additional cash flow from these bonus units to offset the reduced revenue from the affordable units. Another method of density bonus provides for the protection of environmental areas. A community may allow a developer to build more units than is permitted in an area in exchange for permanently protecting green spaces or by making environmental improvements such as landscaping or developing a nature trail in a project area.

2. Cluster Zoning: This concept takes what might otherwise be scattered housing sites and groups them together in a cluster, a kind of rural hamlet. The idea is catching on in Wisconsin and has been proposed in many parts of the state. An advantage to this style of development is that it can help preserve natural or agricultural areas while screening the new development from roadways or valued viewsheds. One problem with cluster zoning is that, by its nature, it is not contiguous to existing development and generally ends up on undeveloped farmlands, woodlots, or natural areas.

3. Cooperative Boundary Agreements: These agreements attempt to facilitate problem solving through citizen involvement, negotiation, mediation, and other cooperative methods. Generally, boundary agreements help both an incorporated community and an unincorporated community forecast future lands for annexation so that infrastructure needs can be forecast and funded. They can also ease contentious relationships.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.05(6)(d)4.

4. Impact Fees: Impact fees are exactions levied to a developer or homeowner by a municipality to offset the community's costs resulting from a development. To set an impact fee rate an analysis called a Public Facilities Needs Assessment must be performed to quantify the fee. Although counties cannot charge impact fees, many municipalities in La Crosse County would benefit from the revenue created by these fees in implementation of their local plans (eg. paying for development of parks in new residential developments).

5. Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND): Traditional neighborhoods mix shops and offices with a variety of housing types. Development is compact and pedestrian friendly. Often, streets are narrower to discourage speeding and increase safety for children, bicyclists, and walkers. Sometimes parks, community centers, or retail areas are established as "town centers" to help give the development a sense of being a neighborhood. Impediments to this kind of development include large lot zoning, minimum setbacks, wide streets, and other ordinances that discourage compact development. Communities interested in allowing developers a TND option need to formally enable this type of development in a zoning code or separate TND ordinance.

(e) Conservation Programming (Non-Regulatory). Conservation of La Crosse County's agricultural, natural, cultural, and energy resources is a primary focus within several elements of this comprehensive plan. Some of these non-regulatory implementation tools include new approaches for the management of land, resources, and utilities. The following tools are listed to explain and inform future decision making.

1. Purchase of Development Rights or Conservation Easements: A purchase of development rights (PDR) program is a voluntary preservation program whereby a landowner voluntarily sells or donates his or her rights to develop a parcel of land to a public agency or charitable organization charged with the preservation of farmland or natural areas. The landowner retains all other ownership rights attached to the land, and a conservation easement is placed on the land and recorded in the title. The buyer (often a local unit of government) essentially purchases the right to develop the land and retires that right permanently, thereby assuring that development will not occur on that particular property. In placing such an easement on their farmland or natural area, participating landowners often take the proceeds from the sale of the development rights to invest in their farming operations or retire from the business, allowing another farmer or other user to purchase the land at lower rates devoid of development rights.

2. Transfer of Development Rights: A transfer of development rights (TDR) program is a technique involving the designation of development (receiving) zones and protected (sending) zones for guiding growth away from sensitive resources and toward controlled development centers. This is accomplished by transferring the development rights from one area to another via local law authorization such as a deed restriction or easement.

3. Working Lands Enterprise Areas (WLEA) program: WLEA are farmland areas designated for fixed periods of time for preservation from non-farm development based on voluntary agreements by farm owners. The State of Wisconsin is currently exploring the development of this voluntary program to encourage and facilitate the clustering of farms which would reduce conflicts with non-farm uses. It would also strengthen exclusive agricultural zoning. If this program is developed, La Crosse County should determine if location in one of these "districts" is a requirement for participation in conservation programs (such as a PDR program).

4. Beginning Farmer and Logger program: This program works to supply a new workforce for continued agricultural production. It would support beginning farmers through statewide support teams (Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, UW Extension), broker connections between beginning and retiring farmers, and promote and market agricultural careers.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.05(6)(e)5.

5. Wisconsin Focus on Energy:

a. Focus on Energy is a public-private partnership offering energy information and services to residential, business and industrial customers throughout Wisconsin. These services are delivered by a group of firms contracted by the Wisconsin Department of Administration's Division of Energy.

b. Focus on Energy offers several grant programs to support the development of renewable energy. The following types of grants are currently available:

- i. Business & Marketing Grants
- ii. Feasibility Study Grants
- iii. Implementation Grants
  - Commercial Solar Water Heating
  - Solar-Electric Systems
  - Wind-Energy Systems
  - Biogas Digesters/Non-Residential Wood Burning (electric)
  - Biogas Digesters (thermal)
  - Non-Residential Wood-Burning (thermal) Systems

6. Irrigation Testing:

a. Uniformity testing is a troubleshooting procedure to check that the water distributed by an irrigation system is being applied uniformly to the field within practical limitations. The University of Wisconsin has a test kit that can be borrowed by Wisconsin growers that contains all the equipment normally needed to check a quarter section straight center pivot system. The kit is located at the Hancock Agricultural Research Station.

b. Pump testing is another important testing procedure. It is typically done in an open discharge method where the pump is disconnected from the irrigation system and a flow meter, pressure indicator and valve is installed on the pump output. The net positive suction pressure of the pump should be determined to ensure that the pump is deep enough in the well to prevent cavitation from a lack of water. Irrigation contractors or well drillers generally provide this type of testing service. It is recommended that pumps and wells be tested every 2 years.

7. Farm Rewiring: The utility industry in Wisconsin has been upgrading the power distribution system for a number of years. However, individual farm electrical systems are often overloaded and deteriorating due to the transition from manual labor to more mechanization and the high moisture environment of animal agriculture. The state's utilities launched a program to assist particularly dairy farmers to upgrade the wiring in their animal housing facilities to current electrical standards in an effort to reduce the likelihood of stray voltage and to improve electrical safety. Financial assistance provides 50% matching grants up to a maximum guidelines and then low interest loans to pay for the costs of rewiring.

8. Solar and Wind Access: Wisconsin allows property owners with wind-energy systems or solar-energy systems to apply for permits guaranteeing unobstructed access to wind or solar resources. A permit may not be granted if an obstruction already exists or if the construction of such an obstruction is already well into the planning stages.

(7) Consistency Among Plan Elements.

(a) The State of Wisconsin planning legislation requires that the implementation element describe how each of the nine-elements will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the plan. Since the La Crosse County completed all planning elements simultaneously, no known inconsistencies exist.

(b) This comprehensive plan references previous planning efforts, and details future planning needs. Whenever possible, existing municipal plans were incorporated in part or in whole, to ensure consistency with local decision making. To keep consistency with the comprehensive plan the county should incorporate existing plans as components to the comprehensive plan, and adopt all future plans as detailed elements of this plan.

(8) Plan Adoption, Monitoring, Amendments and Update.

(a) Plan Adoption. In order to implement this plan it must be adopted by the County Planning, Resources and Development Committee. After the Committee adopts the Plan by resolution, the County Board must adopt the plan by ordinance. This action formalizes the plan document as a frame of reference for general development decisions over the next 20 years. Once formally adopted, the plan becomes a tool for communicating the community's land use policy and for coordinating legislative decisions.

(b) Plan Use, Evaluation, and Amendments.

1. La Crosse County will base all of its land use decisions against this plan's goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations including decisions on private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions.

2. La Crosse County can expect gradual change in the years to come. Although this Plan has described policies and actions for future implementation, it is impossible to predict the exact future condition of the county. As such, the goals, objectives, and actions should be monitored on a regular basis to maintain concurrence with changing conditions.

3. The *La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan* may be amended at any time by the County Board following the same statutory process to amend the plan as it originally followed when it was initially adopted (regardless of how minor the amendment or change is).

4. To keep current with municipal actions, La Crosse County will update the La Crosse County Future Land Use Map at least annually. Municipalities amending or updating their local comprehensive plan should inform the county about these decisions and submit appropriate documentation to ensure consistency between the local and county plans.

5. The plan should be evaluated at least every 5 years, and updated at least every 10 years. Members of the County Board, planning committees, and any other decision-making body should periodically review the plan and identify areas that might need to be updated.

6. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee should reconvene five years after the initial adoption of the *La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan*, and every five years thereafter, to review the comprehensive plan and suggest any amendments to the La Crosse County Board. The review should consist of the following steps:

a. Solicit recommendations for amendments from the general public, using procedures described in the *Public Participation Plan*;

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b. Review annual reports on the comprehensive plan, generated when updates to the Future Land Use Map are made;

c. Review goals and objectives to ensure they are still relevant and reflect current community desires;

d. Review policies, programs, and implementation strategies to eliminate completed tasks and identify new approaches if appropriate;

e. Update Action Plan, as needed.

(c) Plan Update. According to the State Comprehensive Planning Law this Plan must be updated at least once every ten years. As opposed to an amendment or evaluation, the plan update is a major rewrite of the plan document and supporting maps. If the evaluation and amendment process outlined above takes place, it is likely these periodic amendments will keep the plan current and focus should instead be made on updating aging components of the plan, such as existing conditions (which could be updated with new Census information) and maps (new data will likely be available over ten years time).

(9) 5-Year Action Plan. The plan implementation table on the following pages provides a detailed list and work schedule of major actions that the county should complete as part of the implementation of the comprehensive plan. It should be noted that many of the actions require considerable cooperation with others, including the citizens of La Crosse County, county staff, and local/state governments. The completion of recommended actions in the timeframe presented may be affected and or impacted due to competing interests, other priorities, and financial limitations facing the county.

<b>Table 9.1: Action Plan</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
<b>Housing</b>		
Make tax delinquent lands available at below market rate prices to not-for-profit housing providers.	La Crosse County Housing Commission; Executive Committee	2008
Work with local advocacy agencies to enhance special needs housing.	La Crosse County Housing Commission	Ongoing
<b>Transportation</b>		
Require developments to provide appropriate areas for future transit and transportation facilities.	Planning, Resources & Development Committee	Immediate
Annually review and upgrade county highways.	Pubic Works & Infrastructure Committee	Ongoing
Increase connections between segments of the La Crosse County trail system.	Park Development Review Board; Pubic Works & Infrastructure Committee	Ongoing
Approve ordinance amendments which require Access Control and Transportation Impact Analysis with new	Pubic Works & Infrastructure Committee	2008

<b>Table 9.1: Action Plan</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>Schedule</b>

developments

**Community Facilities and Utilities**

Implement recommendations of the Solid Waste Management Plan.	Solid Waste Policy Board; Public Works & Infrastructure Committee	Immediate
Draft a countywide stormwater management ordinance.	Planning, Resources & Development Committee	2008
Explore improvements to La Crosse County buildings to meet Energy Efficiency standards.	Joint Oversight Committee on Sustainability; Public Works & Infrastructure Committee	2008
Adopt energy and environmental design standards for County Facilities.	Joint Oversight Committee on Sustainability; Public Works & Infrastructure Committee	2009
Develop Public Works Capital Improvement Plan.	Public Works & Infrastructure Committee	2008

**Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources**

Develop a Purchase of Development Rights road show for countywide education and issues collection.	County Land Conservation Staff; County Planning Staff	Immediate
Update County Farmland Preservation Plan.	County Land Conservation Staff; County Planning Staff	2009

**Economic Development**

Develop countywide Economic Development Plan.	Economic Development Fund, Inc. Board; County Planning Staff	2008
Leverage additional state and local funding for economic development.	Economic Development Fund, Inc. Board	Ongoing

**Intergovernmental Cooperation**

Assist in the development of Cooperative Boundary Agreements.	Extra-Territorial Technical Advisory Committee; Planning, Resources & Development Committee; County Planning Staff with assistance from:	
	1. Hamilton, West Salem, and C. Onalaska (in 1 yr)	1. 2008
	2. Holmen and Holland (in 1 yr)	2. 2008
	3. T. Onalaska and C. Onalaska (in 1 yr)	3. 2008
	4. Shelby and C. La Crosse (in 3 yrs)	4. 2011
	5. Medary and C. La Crosse (in 3 yrs)	5. 2011
	6. Town and Village of Bangor (in 3 yrs)	6. 2011
	7. Update T. Campbell and C. La Crosse (in 5 yrs)	7. 2013

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**Land Use**

Comprehensive rewrite of La Crosse County Zoning Code.	Planning, Resources & Development Committee	2008
Update La Crosse County Subdivision Code.	Planning, Resources & Development Committee	2009
Draft Site Plan Review Ordinance.	County Planning, Zoning and Land Information Staff	2009
Develop Standards to review plan implementation progress.	County Planning, Zoning and Land Information Staff	2008
Develop Standards to judge consistency of land use decisions with adopted comp plan.	Planning, Resources & Development Committee	2008
Update Sign Regulations in the Zoning Code (Ch. 17)	Planning, Resources & Development Committee	2008
Develop regulations for Conservation Subdivision design within the Subdivision and Platting Ordinance (Ch. 18)	Planning, Resources & Development Committee	2008

31.06 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

(1) Introduction.

(a) Chapter Overview.

1. Agriculture is a vital part of Wisconsin's economy and cultural identification. In 2010, agriculture constituted a \$59 billion industry in Wisconsin. Despite its importance, agriculture faces many challenges. Farmland around the country is being lost at an alarming rate, and once it is gone we cannot get it back. In the "Farming on the Edge" report released by American Farmland Trust, it was estimated that 1 acre of farmland in the United States is lost every minute. In Wisconsin this translates into the approximate loss of 22,500 acres of productive farmland a year due to development. Because of the economic importance of agriculture in Wisconsin and the potential for the continued loss of our agricultural land base, farmland preservation planning is crucial to preserve the agricultural land remaining in the state. Although well crafted farmland preservation plans may not necessarily restrict the rate of land development, they can help to redirect development towards more appropriate areas, preserve prime farmlands, promote balanced growth, and keep infrastructure costs low while strengthening local economies and protecting the environment.

2. This chapter will define farmland preservation planning activities in La Crosse County, past and present, and provide a menu of activities and priorities to accomplish farmland preservation in earnest. The first, and current, Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) was adopted in 1980. This plan has become outdated which is typical throughout Wisconsin. With the adoption of the La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan in 2008, another step toward updating land use policies and preserving farmland in La Crosse County was completed.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(1)(a)3.

3. Another important event occurred on June 29, 2009. On this date, the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative (WLI) was adopted as part of the 2009-2011 Biennial Budget known as Wisconsin Act 28. This initiative became effective on July 1, 2009. One of the top priorities of the WLI is a requirement for every county in the State to update their farmland preservation plan. Under the new law, the La Crosse County Farmland Preservation Plan must be updated by December 31, 2012 with an extension. This document is meant to fulfill the Working Lands Initiative mandate. This document will also provide a process by which La Crosse County will accomplish farmland preservation activities and meet the standards of the Working Lands Initiative.

(b) Purpose and Scope.

1. The purpose for drafting, adopting and implementing a Farmland Preservation Plan is achieved by gathering and documenting public input. In this manner, La Crosse County can create an appropriate process for mapping areas for preservation and define the tools to accomplish this systematic approach to farmland preservation. Upon completion of the initial portions of public input, the Steering Committee will develop plan goals, objectives, and criteria for mapping Farmland Preservation Areas.

2. In the past, agricultural land has been treated in many land use plans as a "holding" area for eventual developed uses. Where planning has occurred for local agriculture, too frequently the plan treats the agricultural sector as an interim use, eventually giving way to other land uses. Agricultural land often lacks a legal underpinning to protect it, even relative to wetlands and other natural areas, which are often explicitly protected under federal or state law. The mapping of appropriate farmland preservation areas will place a significantly higher emphasis on the preservation of these areas. County farmland preservation plans are not intended to prevent non-agricultural development. Rather, planning and farmland preservation tools are used to limit non-agricultural development in areas with favorable conditions for agricultural enterprises and target those other areas suitable for non-agricultural development. Planning for long-term farmland preservation and for the economic development of agriculture can help identify and preserve the sufficient land and infrastructure base needed to support agriculture. A plan that understands and addresses the needs of farm and agriculturally-related business owners can help insure predictability and security for these business owners. Well thought out plans also help minimize conflict arising from incompatible land uses while at the same time protecting the rural heritage that has long defined Wisconsin. Planning for agriculture can also contribute to other goals, such as preserving wildlife habitat areas and maintaining groundwater recharge areas.

(c) Overview of 1980 Plan. The previous La Crosse County Farmland Preservation Plan was adopted in 1980. This plan sought to:

1. Acknowledge that the general physical characteristics of La Crosse County, being its topography and access to water based resources, has greatly influenced the patterns of social and economic development presently existing in La Crosse County.

2. Emphasize that it is desirable to preserve our land and water based resources and that to do so will preserve the quality of life in La Crosse County.

3. Preserve that land considered most suitable for agricultural production.

4. Minimize the adverse effects of urban growth in agricultural areas of La Crosse County.

5. Consider all land within La Crosse County as non-replaceable and to encourage land usage within the County to be compatible with the natural environment.

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The La Crosse County Planning Department led the development of the plan, facilitated through a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) in 1979. Public meetings provided the opportunity to introduce the farmland preservation program and to understand the needs and future visions of County citizens. A citizen advisory committee containing at least 1 representative from each town provided regular commentary. A technical advisory group with staff from County, State, and regional agencies provided general assistance in preparing the report. In addition to the primary document, the Planning Department prepared separate planning elements specific to each town. As a result, the County received certification from DATCP for their revised zoning ordinance, which became the primary tool for preserving farmland in La Crosse County.

(d) Overview of 2009 Working Lands Initiative.

1. After years of program planning and input from stakeholders around the state, the Wisconsin Legislature passed landmark legislation in 2009. Wisconsin Act 28 (2009-2011 Budget Bill) created what is known as the Working Lands Initiative (WLI). This new law made very significant revisions to Chapter 91 Wisconsin Statutes, which had been - with minor changes in the interim period - Wisconsin's farmland preservation law since 1977. The new law continues a long history of relying on local governments to lead program implementation efforts and attempts to improve on the success of these efforts by:

a. Expanding and modernizing the state's existing farmland preservation program.

b. Creating new tools to assist in local program implementation, including:

(i) Promulgation of Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs).

(ii) Creation of a Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) matching grant program.

2. One of the first steps in modernizing the existing program is a requirement for every county in the State to update their farmland preservation plan. Under the new law, the La Crosse County Farmland Preservation Plan must be updated by December 31, 2011.

3. The farmland preservation planning effort is coordinated through a steering committee made up of farmers, local plan commissioners, town planners, local & county elected officials, and staff along with assistance from the DATCP.

4. Created by Wisconsin Act 28, (2009-11 Biennial Budget Bill), the WLI is the result of input by government institutions, non-government organizations, and private businesses to provide tools that can be used to help preserve Wisconsin farmland, promote agriculture, enhance the natural environment, and minimize conflicts created by competing land uses.

5. Using current agricultural practices and land-use realities, the WLI establishes more modern, flexible farmland preservation policies with less state oversight. This helps local governments plan and preserve agricultural land as well as create compact, focused suburban and urban development. WLI helps farmers keep land in agricultural use, employ good conservation practices, and develop agricultural enterprise areas.

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6. The new WLI consolidates and enhances tax credits, maintains the use value assessment program, establishes a state working lands trust fund, and creates a new program (PACE) for targeted purchases of agricultural conservation easements from willing landowners.

(e) Plan Preparation, Review and Adoption.

1. In 2010, the La Crosse County Zoning and Planning office applied for and received a grant to prepare a 5-year update to the Farmland Preservation Plan. The County decided to accomplish this process in-house.

2. The La Crosse County Board of Supervisors next adopted a public participation plan in September of 2010 that describes the ways in which public and local units of government would be involved in the preparation, review, and approval of the plan update. A copy of the public participation plan is included as Appendix A. Key elements include: a project web site, publication of all meetings, submittal of press releases, and numerous opportunities for submitting comments and suggestions.

3. Municipalities within the County were involved in the drafting of this plan in a number of ways and were kept abreast of the plan's progress. A Farmland Preservation Steering Committee was appointed, comprised of local farmers, elected and appointed officials, and local administrative staff to provide direction in the preparation of the new La Crosse County FPP. The committee structure was very similar to that of the subcommittee that was assembled to guide the preparation of the County Development Plan. The committee consisted of 9 members meeting on a regular basis to provide the staff direction and act as a conduit to direct information back to the towns for their consideration as this plan was being drafted.

4. With assistance from staff, the public and elected officials, the Steering Committee prepared numerous plan drafts which were presented to the public, towns and county officials and submitted the drafts to DATCP for certification. A final draft of the plan was prepared based on the local government input that was received. The Steering Committee approved a resolution supporting this draft. The Planning, Resources and Development Committee of the County Board reviewed this draft on July 30, 2012, and recommended the draft plan to the full County Board for its review and action, satisfying the requirement under Wis. Stat. s. 66.1001 to adopt the plan by ordinance.

5. On September 20th, 2012 the County Board of Supervisors adopted this plan by County Ordinance.

6. Every effort has been made to use the best available data for the update. Because the plan uses data from the 2010 census of population and housing, the demographic information is the most recent data available and should be appropriate for years to come.

7. The La Crosse County Farmland Preservation Plan must be consistent with the La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan, the certified La Crosse County Zoning Ordinance, Official Zoning Map for La Crosse County, and in the mapped farmland preservation areas. The La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan, La Crosse County Zoning Ordinance, and the La Crosse County Farmland Preservation Plan must be certified by DATCP for any landowner in La Crosse County to be eligible for Farmland Preservation Program Incentives.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(1)(d)8.

8. Recognizing that land use plans should not be static documents, the 2008 La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan provides for an amendment process, which allows for consideration of amendments to the adopted plan on an annual basis. While the majority of amendments over time are anticipated to be property-specific, some amendments take a more comprehensive form. The incorporation of the Farmland Preservation Plan is the first such comprehensive amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. Following is a list of amendments to the Comprehensive Plan:

a. The Table of Contents has been repealed and recreated as part of the 2012 FPP amendment in order to reflect the inclusion of the new Appendix "A - D".

b. The Future Land Use Map, depicting the County's recommended land use plan map as of the date of plan adoption in 2008, has been amended by the adoption of this FPP amendment. This Future Land Use Map, which is maintained and updated as a digital mapping layer on the County Land Records GIS Mapping site at <http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us:81/GISMapping/>, has been updated to reflect the land use category designations that are set forth by the new FPP.

c. The FPP text amends the "Agricultural Preservation" land use category of the Comprehensive Plan to now become the new "Farmland Preservation" category and revises the definition of this category to be consistent with the definition and criteria established for farmland preservation areas, as specified in s. 31.04 (4)(a)2.

9. The remainder of the 2008 Plan document text remains unchanged. As amended, the Comprehensive Plan document incorporates La Crosse County's adopted Farmland Preservation Plan and meets the consistency benchmark required by statute.

(f) Plan Maintenance and Amendment.

1. Wis. Stat. s. 66.1001 requires that an adopted plan be reviewed and updated at least once every 10 years. However, to ensure that the plan remains a viable planning tool, it should be reviewed each 5 years and following any significant change in land use, land use policy or land use regulation in La Crosse County. Staff and committee members should review statistics of land use changes annually and try to predict any major shifts in land use policy on a local, regional, and state level and economic shifts in how land is utilized to prepare for potentially necessary plan amendment activities.

2. Annual Review.

a. The Zoning and Planning Department should review and monitor this plan and suggest amendments to the Planning Resources and Development Committee in November of every calendar year. As part of this review, staff should contact each of the participating municipalities to provide them with the opportunity to suggest changes. The primary focus during this review will be on Chapter 6 of the FPP which lists the goals, objectives, polices, and activities. In the analysis of demographic shifts that are occurring in La Crosse County, to determine whether amendments are needed, the following considerations should be reviewed:

- i. General development trends.
- ii. Farmland Conversion Rates.
- iii. Farmland Preservation goals and objectives.
- iv. Completed implementation activities and their Effectiveness.

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- v. Recommended strategies.
- vi. Available resources for future projects.
- vii. Public input.
- viii. Input from other stakeholders.

b. Without periodic review and assessment, this plan has the potential to lose its relevance as conditions change, specific projects are implemented, and new priorities emerge.

3. History of Adoption and Amendment.

a. 1953 – Initial Adoption of Zoning in La Crosse County

- Original ordinance approved and adopted by the Towns:

Bangor	January 1,	1965
Barre	August 28,	1953
Burns	September 14,	1953
Campbell	September 15,	1953
Farmington	August 31,	1953
Greenfield	August 31,	1953
Hamilton	September 2,	1953
Holland	April 6,	1954
Medary	September 15,	1953
Onalaska	September 15,	1953
Shelby	September 16,	1953
Washington	September 2,	1953

b. 1980 – Farmland Preservation Plan and Zoning Ordinance

- Farmland Preservation Approved and Adopted by Towns:

Bangor	August 19,	1982
Barre	November 11,	1980
Burns	July 21,	1983
Farmington	November 12,	1980
Greenfield	November 12,	1980
Hamilton	November 18,	1982
Holland	September 19,	1985
Onalaska	November 19,	1980
Shelby	November 17,	1980
Washington	November 12,	1980

Certified\*

\*Towns of Campbell and Medary did not adopt Farmland Preservation Zoning.

(2) Background Conditions.

(a) Chapter Overview. This chapter provides a brief overview of La Crosse County to provide the general context for farmland preservation planning. Due to very recent efforts by La Crosse County, there is significant data regarding existing conditions in both the comprehensive plan, adopted in 2006, and the land and water resource management plan adopted in 2010. The information in this chapter is intended to supplement those sources or to update relevant data.

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(b) Land Use. La Crosse County is made up of over 300,000 acres. While nearly 70% of the County remains in agriculture or natural cover, the County is home to a regional center and metropolitan area. It is therefore not surprising that the County includes some of the fastest growing communities in the state. A benefit of the County planning effort is to provide a context to consider local growth decisions in conjunction with neighboring communities.

Table 2.1: Existing Land Use Table

	Resid.	Comm.	Manuf.	Agriculture	Swamp and Waste	Forest	Total
LA CROSSE (C)	3,769	2,968	508	93	173	6	14,000
ONALASKA (C)	1,610	939	46	545	338	346	5,994
BANGOR (T)	459	17	146	10,035	292	7,812	22,429
BARRE (T)	544	141	0	6,756	53	3,545	13,211
BURNS (T)	511	39	23	16,267	780	11,453	31,070
CAMPBELL (T)	803	131	11	0	39	0	8,071
FARMINGTON (T)	680	23	117	24,028	1,439	18,712	48,584
GREENFIELD (T)	776	101	72	7,815	161	8,468	19,282
HAMILTON (T)	1,198	340	158	15,023	349	10,698	32,729
HOLLAND (T)	1,398	273	627	6,727	1,734	7,642	29,064
MEDARY (T)	716	184	373	1,540	992	2,494	7,492
ONALASKA (T)	2,138	182	108	9,542	305	6,149	28,975
SHELBY (T)	4,031	219	7	3,667	272	4,391	18,815
WASHINGTON (T)	297	20	0	12,877	214	8,002	23,141
BANGOR (T)	125	31	3	127	155	0	667
HOLMEN (V)	706	278	50	176	3	25	1,941
ROCKLAND (V)	111	4	36	55	0	0	357
WEST SALEM (V)	361	229	61	11	9	0	1,452
<b>La Crosse County</b>	<b>20,233</b>	<b>6,119</b>	<b>2,346</b>	<b>115,284</b>	<b>7,308</b>	<b>89,743</b>	<b>307,274</b>

Source: Mississippi River Planning Commission, 2000

(c) Population. As of the census in 2010, there were 114,638 County residents, which represents a 7% increase over 1990 (Table 2-2).

Table 2-2. Population; La Crosse County and Civil Divisions; 1980 through 2025

La Crosse County Census Data - Population									
	1980 Pop.	1990 Pop.	2000 Pop.	2005 Pop.	2010 Pop.	% Change 2000- 2010	2015 Population Projections	2020	2025
<b>La Crosse County</b>	91,056	97,904	107,120	110,302	<b>114,638</b>	7%	115,538	118,246	122,291
<b>Un-incorporated</b>									
Bangor town	572	598	583	592	<b>615</b>	5%	603	610	623
Barre town	901	909	1,014	1,063	<b>1,234</b>	22%	1,148	1,191	1,248
Burns town	988	977	979	985	<b>947</b>	-3%	989	993	1,007
Campbell town	4,118	4,490	4,410	4,448	<b>4,314</b>	-2%	4,486	4,511	4,587
Farmington town	1,603	1,577	1,733	1,820	<b>2,061</b>	19%	1,975	2,052	2,153
Greenfield town	1,537	1,617	1,538	1,562	<b>2,060</b>	34%	1,596	1,614	1,651
Hamilton town	1,472	1,633	2,103	2,294	<b>2,436</b>	16%	2,646	2,821	3,028
Holland town	1,776	2,175	3,042	3,329	<b>3,701</b>	22%	3,867	4,134	4,447
Medary town	1,794	1,539	1,463	1,493	<b>1,461</b>	0%	1,538	1,562	1,604
Onalaska town	5,386	5,803	5,210	5,445	<b>5,623</b>	8%	5,860	6,071	6,349
Shelby town	5,620	5,002	4,687	4,676	<b>4,715</b>	1%	4,613	4,589	4,617
Washington town	611	598	738	772	<b>558</b>	-24%	831	861	901
<b>Incorporated</b>									
Bangor village	1,012	1,076	1,400	1,474	<b>1,459</b>	4%	1,606	1,672	1,757
Holmen village	2,411	3,236	6,200	6,931	<b>9,005</b>	45%	8,287	8,958	9,729
Rockland village	383	509	625	669	<b>594</b>	-5%	750	790	839
West Salem village	3,276	3,611	4,738	5,076	<b>4,799</b>	1%	5,691	5,998	6,372
Onalaska city	9,249	11,414	14,839	15,955	<b>17,736</b>	20%	17,993	19,009	20,238
La Crosse city	48,347	51,140	51,818	51,718	<b>51,320</b>	-1%	51,059	50,810	51,141
<b>Towns Subtotal</b>	26378	26918	27500	28479	<b>29725</b>	8%	30152	31009	32215
<b>Villages Subtotal</b>	7,082	8,432	12,963	14,150	<b>15,857</b>	22%	16,334	17,418	18,697
<b>Cities Subtotal</b>	57,596	62,554	66,657	67,673	<b>69,056</b>	4%	69,052	69,819	71,379

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (counts), Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Intergovernmental Relations (estimate), East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (projections)

Notes: 1. Municipality located in La Crosse County and another county

(d) Land Use Patterns and Trends.

1. Map 2.1 and Table 2.1 show the existing land use patterns in 2000.

2. Existing Land Use Patterns. There are over 300,000 acres of land in La Crosse County. The following table and maps describe and depict these patterns. Countywide, agriculture and forest lands make up for 67% of the County’s land area, with agriculture specifically making up just under 38% of the total. Residential lands make up approximately 7% of the County’s acreage. A detailed set of existing land use acreages has also been prepared by the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse. These estimates were created through a different methodology and provide additional detail than those done by the Regional Planning Commission.

3. Land Use Density. Land use density is highest in areas closest to the urban areas as well as along the various lakeshores and some of the major road corridors. In addition, isolated pockets of higher density development are appearing in rural areas experiencing newer subdivision development. This is particularly evident in the Town of Onalaska and Hamilton. Lower density development on parcels more than 20 acres in size are typically found in agricultural areas and in or within environmentally sensitive areas.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(2)(d)4.

4. Existing/Potential Land Use Conflicts. There are no known existing land use conflicts where La Crosse County has purview over the mitigation of conflict. Potentially, annexation by incorporated communities will have an impact on town land use in some areas. La Crosse County is currently working with several communities to develop boundary agreements to forecast annexations and prevent conflicts. The County continues to provide assistance on land use issues where appropriate.

(e) Development Guidelines.

1. Future land use projections represent generalized growth scenarios based on State projections and current development densities. The projections indicate the County should generally plan to accommodate 5,000 additional combined acres of residential, commercial, and industrial land over the next 20 years. A generalized look at land supply shows that there are nearly 190,000 acres that are physically suited for development.

2. If proposed development projects exceed the following guidelines, communities shall review and amend their plans. This is done to ensure all planning documents are providing sufficient guidance to residents, property owners, staff, and officials. The County shall not approve development proposals that exceed these guidelines prior to plan amendments being adopted. Such amendments shall address considerations for use, location, form, and timing of the proposed development. These projections are intended for 10 years from plan adoption.

**Table 2.3: Plan Review "Guidelines" in Acres**

Town	Residential Acres	Non/Residential Acres	Total Acres
Bangor	120	80	200
Barre	160	40	200
Burns	280	40	320
Campbell	*	*	*
Farmington	400	40	440
Greenfield	240	40	280
Hamilton	520	40	560
Holland	620	140	760
Medary	320	40	360
Onalaska	840	120	960
Shelby	560	40	600
Washington	80	40	120

\* As Campbell has a very limited supply of undeveloped land, guidelines for new growth have not been recommended.

(f) Planned Urban Development.

1. According to the 2008 La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan, urban development is planned largely around existing urban centers and existing areas of dense development in order to preserve the existing urban and rural development patterns of the County. The County's development pattern has formed a sideways "T" which centers the leg of the "T" on the central corridor, east to west of the La Crosse River and Interstate 90. The top of the "T" forms along the Western Edge of the County north and south along the Black and Mississippi river Corridors and along the State Highway 157, Highway 35/53 corridor. The Plan also acknowledges the fiscal advantages of this urban development policy in efficient and economical use of existing infrastructure investment.

2. The plan also identifies urbanizing districts in the County based on the adjacencies to urbanized areas with transportation arterials and services.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(2)(f)3.

3. Map 2.2 shows those areas slated for development.

(g) Intergovernmental Boundary Agreements.

1. Definition of Intergovernmental Boundary Agreement. An agreement between local communities created pursuant to Wis. Stat. sections 66.0307, 66.0301, or 66.0225, typically dealing with annexation, incorporation, consolidation, land use, revenue, service provision and other intergovernmental issues.

2. These agreements attempt to facilitate problem solving through citizen involvement, negotiation, mediation, and other cooperative methods. Generally, boundary agreements help both an incorporated community and an unincorporated community forecast future lands for annexation so that infrastructure needs can be forecast and funded. They can also ease contentious relationships.

3. Numerous agreements are in place between municipalities in La Crosse County, which include resource and equipment sharing, shared services, County-wide emergency dispatch, County-wide household hazardous waste, share planning and economic development functions, sewer service area agreements, extra-territorial technical sub-division review, and etc. Most of these agreements are formal, but not created pursuant to this state statute. The 2 agreements that exist pursuant to this statute are:

a. The City of La Crosse and Town of Campbell are subject to a boundary agreement that controls annexations to the city.

b. The City and Town of Onalaska have a boundary agreement.

(3) Agricultural Context.

(a) Chapter Overview. As we complete each chapter of this Farmland Preservation Plan, we will continue to build a strong foundation for the decisions which will ultimately implement the plan. In making these decisions, it is important to look at agriculture in La Crosse County in an historic context. Historic farmland conversion trends, economic impacts, and perceptions of agriculture by landowners and other residents continue to shape the tools we use to preserve farmland. The effect of demographic shifts on the existing plan may dictate the need for any amendments.

(b) Agricultural Land. According to the 2007 census of agriculture, there were 845 farms in La Crosse County, compared to 868 in 2002, representing a decrease of 2.7%. The number of acres of farmland declined from 174,213 in 2002 to 165,368. This data translates into a 2.5% decline in the average farm size – from 200.7 acres in 2002 to 195.7 acres in 2007.

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Statistically, in the State of Wisconsin some recent observations include:

**Table 5-1. Harvested Cropland by Farm Size: 2002 and 2007**

Farm Size	2002		2007	
	Quantity	Acres	Quantity	Acres
1 to 9 acres	23	67	20	79
10 to 49 acres	86	1468	81	863
50 to 69 acres	28	(D)	29	1,003
70 to 99 acres	53	1,779	48	1,340
100 to 139 acres	62	2,772	56	2,829
140 to 179 acres	70	4,049	74	4,187
180 to 219 acres	46	4,606	40	3,578
220 to 259 acres	42	4,886	38	4,103
260 to 499 acres	117	20,384	123	21,492
500 to 999 acres	62	23,330	49	19,574
1,000 to 1,999 acres	12	10,540	9	7,302
2,000 acres or more	2	(D)	4	9,150
Total	603	177,831	571	75,500

Source: 2002 Census of Agriculture; 2007 Census of Agriculture  
 D = Withheld by source to avoid disclosing data for individual farms

agriculture.

1. A sharp drop (-43%) in the number of acres being diverted from
2. Value of land diverted fell sharply (-24%).
3. Value of agricultural land rose 12%.
4. Cash receipts for crops rose 34%.
5. Corn up 46%.
6. Soybeans up 25%.
7. Projected production increases in 2010.
8. 2011 La Crosse County only 36 acres were diverted in 2008.

**Table 5-2. Farm Use: 2002 and 2007**

Value of Sales	2002		2007	
	Acres	Percent of Total	Acres	Percent of Total
Cropland	95,439	54.8	87,654	53.0
Woodland	58,156	33.4	54,013	32.6
Per Permanent pasture	11,583	6.6	15,316	9.3
Far Farmstead, buildings, ponds, roads, etc.	9,035	5.2	8,385	5.1
Total	174,213	100	165,368	100

Source: 2002 Census of Agriculture; 2007 Census of Agriculture

(c) Agricultural Operations

1. It becomes more important to refine the analysis of agricultural land uses in the County. This analysis should include not only the number, size and locations of farms in the County, but also the type of farm operations and their economic relationship to other farms, markets and farm infrastructure. This involves not only identifying production, whether conventional or specialty, but how the farms depend on feed operations and other supply sources, custom work, contracting, secondary processing stages and ultimate markets. Examination of broader trends in agricultural economics and agricultural land use at a regional, national, and international scale would also be a useful part of the planning discussion as these trends may impact the future nature, scope, location and focus of local agricultural production. Examples of trends might include farm consolidation, product type and processing chains, supply needs and sources, changes in ownership, median age of operators, and competition of other uses for farm acreage.

2. Economic Growth and Business Development

a. Identification and analysis of the economic generators in the County, including information on employment, wage rates and average per capita income by industry sector, can help provide a picture of economic conditions in the County. As a part of this analysis, the County will consider information about planned or potential areas for agricultural related business development, not just commercial uses in general. The County should always consider existing commercial and industrial areas to assess where and how to focus further development in order to best avoid farmland preservation areas, and cluster ag-related businesses nearer farmland.

b. It is also useful to consider off-farm employment and commuting patterns as these may contribute heavily to decisions of what type of farming is engaged in and are often a major source of farm family income, insurance, and retirement benefits. An inventory of trends in the number, composition, skill levels, seasonality, and wage levels of jobs in the regional labor market is also relevant to the discussion of maintaining farm operations and growing agriculturally related businesses.

c. The data in Tables 5-3, 5-4, and 5-5 illustrate the importance of the agricultural economy in La Crosse County. It is apparent that due to the large number of steep hills, wooded valleys, and river systems, that there is a smaller area for available to agricultural operations. La Crosse County is not typically in the top tier of agricultural production in the State of Wisconsin. This fact highlights the need to preserve the already limited areas of agricultural production for the economic benefit and additional environmental protection that these agricultural areas will provide, especially to help maintain the integrity of our land and water resources in La Crosse County.

(d) Agricultural Economy.

1. How important is Agriculture to La Crosse County's Economy? Agriculture provides 4,062 jobs in La Crosse County, it accounts for \$1.4 Billion in business sales, it contributes \$257 Million in County income, and pays about \$49 Million in taxes. More and more County farmers sell directly to consumers. In all, 63 farms generate \$139,000 in direct-marketing sales. Farmers own and manage 165,368 acres, or 57% of the County's land.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(3)(d)

**Table 5-3. Taxes Generated by Agriculture**

<b>Tax Type</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Sales Tax	\$15.7 Million
Property Tax	\$20.5 Million
Income Tax	\$2.4 Million
Other Tax	\$10.0 Million

Source: 2007 Census of Agriculture

D = Withheld by source to avoid disclosing data for individual farms

**Table 5-4. La Crosse County's Top Commodities**

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Sales by Dollar Value, 2007</b>
1. Milk	\$29.6 Million
2. Grains	\$15.6 Million
3. Cattle and Calves	\$8.7 Million
4. Hogs and Pigs	\$3.6 Million
5. Other Crops and Hay	\$0.95 Million

Source: 2007 Census of Agriculture

**Table 5-5. Operator Characteristics: 2007**

<b>Value of Sales</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Principal operators by primary occupation		
Farming	418	49.4%
Other	427	50.5%
Principal operators by sex		
Male	762	90.2%
Female	83	9.8%
Average age of principal operator (years)	57.0	
All operators by race		
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	
Asian	8	0.6%
Black or African American	0	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	
White	1,297	99.4%
More than one race	0	

Source: 2007 Census of Agriculture

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2. Since agricultural land use within La Crosse County is often in close proximity to surface waters, steep slopes and other natural features and resources, it is important to both preserve the agricultural use of the land and to provide a buffer to preserve the natural areas they border. It will be important to continue to implement conservation compliance standards to ensure that agricultural land use is sensitive to these important natural resources. Farmers in La Crosse County must explore ways of doing more with less land. The best way to accomplish this is by adding value to their products, or collaborating with other operations to seek out economies of scale. Added value and direct marketing practices will continue to succeed in La Crosse County because of the large urban population and proximity of the agricultural use land to these urban centers. This urban-rural link is important and will be further explored in Chapter 4. Agricultural land uses provide rural character in close proximity to urban centers and engages an urban population that seeks open space recreation and respects the landscape. This brings many sets of eyes and ears into the rural areas. These eyes and ears can become critics, or supporters, but as discussed earlier, they also bring added markets for agriculture. It becomes important that agriculture is preserved in a manner that is positive, publicly supported, and provides the commodities that are in demand locally. Agriculture Enterprise Areas would enhance the value added concept and the collaboration portions of this economic section. By creating important rural agri-business partnerships, the agriculture economy in La Crosse County has a better chance to flourish.

(e) Agricultural Infrastructure. Historically, well planned transportation routes have been the most important infrastructure for agriculture. La Crosse County has continued to repair, maintain, rebuild and construct excellent highways for commerce and agricultural transport. There continues to be a subsidence of other available infrastructure in the form of creameries, feed and seed mills and implement dealers because of the reduction of farm acres and farm numbers. It becomes a longer commute to find these businesses and processors on which the agriculture sector depends, and this downward trend will continue if farmland is not preserved in La Crosse County. This infrastructure will continually change and adapt as the markets and use of agricultural land continue to change. With the proliferation of custom operators, machinery is maintained and sold on a more regional basis. More farmers markets and local food sales have arisen as the trends toward sustainability continue. Of note, much of the mapped agricultural infrastructure is within the urbanized areas of La Crosse County. This important relationship between urban and rural land use must be acknowledged, supported and even further developed to continue to improve the economy for agriculture in La Crosse County. Please refer to Map 3.1 for a geographic view of the infrastructure in La Crosse County.

(f) Specialty Agriculture.

1. Diversity in agriculture can provide a community with added value in agribusiness with more choices for consumers, greater economic sustainability due to more resiliency to market products, and environmental fluctuations and growth potential due to diversification and differentiation in the market. The following are examples of specialty agriculture markets:

- a. Christmas tree farms;
- b. Pumpkins, gourds, etc;
- c. Ginseng;
- d. Mushrooms;
- e. Organics;
- f. Specialty grains;
- g. Tree nuts;

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- h. Dried fruit products;
- i. Floriculture;
- j. Wildlife and fish farms;
- k. Specialty fruits and vegetables; and
- l. Specialty meats and cheeses.

2. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) provides a Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) program aiming to increase Wisconsin's competitiveness in global marketplace. According to the DATCP website, The Farm, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) authorized the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide these grants to benefit the specialty crop industry.

(4) Local Food System.

(a) Chapter Overview.

1. Food systems are drawing the attention of planners and policy makers around the U.S. The traditional focus of planners on public resources has seldom focused on the private nature of food markets. However, the acknowledgement of the public health, economic and environmental effects of food systems is on the cutting edge of modern planning to create healthier and economically sustainable communities.

2. Consider the movement away from local markets in the past 100 years to giant conglomerates and the vertical integration of producers who ship food from long distances to a more centralized big box store. Questions emerge about transportation costs, environmental impacts, effects on vulnerable populations' financial independence and security of populations being able to provide for themselves.

3. This chapter will propose policy guidance on this important topic in promoting a stronger, more economically vital and self-reliant system of providing locally grown products for La Crosse County's population.

(b) Non-Farm Food Production.

1. The growing average age of the American farmer along with the consolidation of farms and the emergence of large commercial farms, raises questions about the future of locally available foods and the biodiversity of crops produced. Non-Farm food production provides valuable opportunities for communities to supplement food supplies and lower costs for the delivery and distribution of products. Local regulations, however, can create impediments to non-farm food production. Careful consideration of the public impacts of certain regulations is needed to address benefits and costs of public policy decisions.

2. The following is a list of non-farm food production ideas for communities along with considerations for supportive policies for implementation:

a. Gardens. Support local gardening with Master Gardener lectures, programs and training. Encourage home composting to reduce food wastes and disposal costs. Foster neighborhood interaction, the sharing of diverse, locally grown foods.

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b. Bee Keeping. Work with local bee-keepers on the protection of bee keeping sites and opportunities for growth. Introduce local beekeepers to farm markets.

c. Poultry. Identify opportunities for land use regulations that support small scale poultry production. Hold public workshops to identify tolerances for adjacent land uses and conditions required for permitting.

d. Community Agriculture. Look for suburban locations for farmstead preservation where a co-op may exist, providing space for gardening and farm enthusiasts to interact and produce convenient produce stands.

e. Edible Landscapes. Thousands of dollars are spent each year on public open space landscaping and private landscaping in high employment areas. Fruit trees and other decorative, food producing plants can be used in the landscape with little maintenance. The evolution of new cultivars has provided a new opportunity for low maintenance or maintenance free plant types that offer food for the local population.

(c) Community Gardens.

1. Vacant, underutilized or temporarily undeveloped lands can offer great opportunities for community gardens. Synergistic land use relationships such as a corporate headquarters with a grove of fruit trees that offers produce to workers or the temporary donation of land on a medical or senior housing campus can create a win-win situation for partners.

2. There are many prospective user groups that can be engaged to create community gardens from local gardening or master gardener clubs to ethnic and culturally diverse groups to school programs and business interests such as a local seed supplier. New opportunities for community gardens can emerge from community workshops or lectures by locally successful organizers of existing gardens.

3. Beneficial community gardens can be all sizes and configurations from larger suburban plots to small square foot urban gardening.

**Table 6-1. Community Gardens: 2011**

Name	Municipality	Address
International Gardens	La Crosse	Front Street
Kane Street Gardens	La Crosse	Kane Street
Mayo Washburn Neighborhood Gardens	La Crosse	Division Street

(d) Farmers Market.

1. The number of farmers markets in the United States continues to grow, reports USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), reaching a total of 4,685 in August 2008. Local Farm Markets provide a great opportunity for local growers to converge and offer a greater diversity and quantity of products to the public. The public benefits from the social aspects of farm markets as a community event, often combined with local music, arts and instructive presentations.

2. As the popularity of farmers markets grow, attention must be given to the logistics of these markets to create rewarding environments for both the consumer and producer. Ideas such as limiting the number of green bean sellers can affect the overall diversity of the market, while allowing the seller to sell enough product for their mobilization of goods to pay off. Additionally, conveniences such as truck-farmer provisions, where producers can simply park and open their tailgate, takes the work out of setting up and taking down tables.

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3. Lastly, Farm Markets can grow exponentially in popularity with effective programming and the integration of music, sales or coupon events, promotions and synergistic markets such as arts and crafts.

(e) Food Stores.

1. Definitions of Food Stores.

a. Convenience Store. A retail store that offers a limited range of foods often with non-food product lines.

b. Supermarket. A retail food store that offer a full range of foods.

c. Specialty food store. A retail food store that specializes in a single food category, including bakery, ethnic food, meat, produce, gourmet food, candy, and so on.

2. Local food stores can also contribute to local food systems by working with local as well as national producers and considering convenience to all segments of the population. The recent trends of big box food stores moving to suburban locations can leave poorer areas of metropolitan areas with fewer choices, and often higher priced and less nutritious choices.

3. Land use planning that encourages urban infill over suburban sprawl can keep commercial nodes backfilled when stores go dark, promoting dense compact development patterns that provide good centralized locations for food stores.

4. Additional models in food stores are emerging with smaller convenience sized prototypes in urban centers to the public market concept whereby centralized stores are offered an opportunity to lease smaller booth type configurations with other local food stores, offering the consumer an Asian-style dense market with a large variety of choices in both indoor and outdoor locations.

5. Retail Food Establishment License. A license from the state is required for establishments, permanent and mobile, to sell most processed food directly to consumers in a retail setting. This includes grocery stores, convenience stores, mobile units, knockdown stands, and pushcarts. This does not include restaurants.

6. The tables below will provide current information on Food related activities in La Crosse County:

7. Agriculture Related Fairs.

a. Holmen Korn Fest – 3<sup>rd</sup> Weekend in August, Halfway Creek Park, 300 W. Roberts St., Holmen, WI. Contact: Holmen American Legion at 608-527-4444.

b. June Dairy Days – 1<sup>st</sup> Weekend in June, 1<sup>st</sup> Weekend in June, Village Park, Corner of Hamilton & Mill Streets, West Salem, WI 54669. Contact: [junedairydays@yahoo.com](mailto:junedairydays@yahoo.com).

c. La Crosse County Interstate Fair – 3<sup>rd</sup> Week in July, Intersection of Hwy 16 and County Road M, West Salem, WI 54669.

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8. Farmer's Markets

a. City of La Crosse:

- (i) Bridgeview Plaza, Rose St.: 20-25 vendors, Wednesdays- 8 a.m.- 1 p.m.
- (ii) Hmong Mutual Assistance, 1815 Ward Ave, Thursdays- 7 a.m.-4 p.m.
- (iii) Cameron Park, King St. between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>: 12- 15 vendors, Fridays- 4 p.m. - dusk.
- (iv) Village Shopping Center, 2418 State Rd, 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.
- (v) County Parking Lot, between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> street: 40-50 vendors, Saturdays- 6 a.m. until items sold.

b. County of La Crosse.

- (i) Festival Foods Parking Lot, Onalaska, 30-40 vendors, Sundays, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- (ii) Festival Foods, Holmen, Wednesdays, 3 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- (iii) Jefferson and Mill Streets, West Salem, Wednesdays, 3 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

c. In addition to these 8 public markets, there are an estimated 7 community supported agriculture farms serving the La Crosse Area in the 2010 season:

- (i) Driftless Farm CSA, Stoddard, WI;
- (ii) Harmony Valley Farm, Viroqua, WI;
- (iii) Keewaydin Farms, Viola, WI;
- (iv) Lynwood Farm CSA, Stoddard, WI;
- (v) Old Oak Family Farm, Bangor, WI;
- (vi) Ridgeland Harvest, Viroqua, WI; and,
- (vii) Small Family CSA, La Farge, WI.

(f) Emergency Food Resources.

1. Definition of Emergency Food Resources.

a. Community Meal Center – a place where prepared meals are offered to the hungry on a regular basis and generally at no cost. Community meal centers are often operated by church groups or other local community organizations. Also known as “soup kitchens”.

b. Food Bank – a nonprofit organization that collects food from a variety of sources and distributes it to food pantries, community meal centers, homeless shelters, and similar organizations that exist to feed low-income residents in the community. Food is generally donated to a food bank by for-profit growers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers who in the normal course of business have excess food that they cannot sell.

c. Food Pantry – a place where food is offered to low-income residents for free or a low cost. Food pantries are often operated by church groups or other local community organizations.

2. According to the American Planning Association’s Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning, 2007, Hunger and Food Insecurity are prevalent in the United States. APA’s Policy Guide references The US Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service (2006) report that indicates in 2005, 11% of all US Households were “food insecure” because of a lack of sufficient food.

3. Centralization of food producers, transport costs and convenience in local markets may exacerbate the problem, making communities more and more reliant on outside sources.

4. In order to address this growing threat to local sustainability and self-sufficiency, consideration may be given to the realm of opportunities listed in this chapter for local food production, public education on topics such as food preservation, canning techniques and local resources such as community gardens.

5. Assessing a region’s local food needs during a crisis such as a major natural disaster, terrorist attack or disease can assist planners and policy makers in understanding what emergency food resources may be needed in case of a disaster, but may also create less reliance on outside food sources through the implementation of various local food systems planning objectives.

6. Emergency Food Resources.

a. A Place of Grace Catholic Worker House – 919 Hood Street, La Crosse, 608-781-6224.

b. Community Garden – corner of Kane Street and St. Cloud Street, La Crosse, 608-386-3319, <http://www.lacrossehtf.org>.

c. First Evangelical Free Church Food Pantry – 1950 State Road 35, Onalaska, 608-782-6022.

d. Onalaska Emergency Food Basket – 735 Sand Lake Road, Onalaska, 608-783-7722.

e. Salvation Army – 223 8<sup>th</sup> Street North, La Crosse, 608-782-6126, <http://www.salvationarmylacrosse.org>.

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f. WAFER Emergency Food Shelter – 403 Causeway Boulevard, La Crosse, 608-782-6003, <http://waferlacrosse.org>.

g. West Salem Area Community Care & Share Pantry – 359 North Leonard Street, West Salem, 608-786-1142.

h. Come for Supper – Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, 612 Division Street, La Crosse, 608-782-3468.

i. Monday’s Meals – St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, 1022 Caledonia Street, La Crosse, 608-782-6421.

j. Bethany Lutheran Home Delivered Meals – 1315 Cass Street, La Crosse, 608-796-1092, <http://www.bethanylutheranhomes.org>.

(g) Implementation and Policy Outcomes for Local Unites of Government.

1. A variety of implementation tools related to food systems planning are available to local units of government for consideration. Typical implementation tools include zoning ordinances, master planning, promotion and marketing, public-private partnerships and collaborative agreements. Zoning tools may include:

a. Flexible zoning districts such as Planned Unit Developments or Conservation Developments allowing urban agriculture or home based business.

b. Conditional uses for a variety of agricultural uses.

c. Permitted temporary uses for produce stands or farm markets.

2. Promotion and marketing may be subsidized by local units of government that wish to promote buy local programs or local food based businesses or events supporting local agriculture.

3. Public private partnerships may involve leveraging public assets such as land or public parking lots for events such as farmers markets, truck farmer parking or community gardens. Municipalities can offer public land for various agricultural uses in exchange for private maintenance of public spaces or lease revenue. Other collaborative agreements may invite local producers to use community facilities for winter events or the sharing of public equipment in the maintenance of community gardens.

(5) Farmland Protection Tools.

(a) Chapter Overview.

1. This chapter describes farmland protection tools that are intended to help protect farmland from incompatible land development. Some of the tools are unique to Wisconsin, while others have been used in various parts of the United States.

2. The tools are grouped into broad categories for organizational purposes. The last section of this chapter presents a summary of those tools that the towns and the County can use to help protect farmland. Benefits and limitations are described along with funding requirements; availability and status of current implementation.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(5)(b)

(b) Educational Tools.

1. Options Review for Developers. The County could request (or require) property owners who wish to urbanize their property to meet with government institutions or non-government (conservation) organizations to discuss farmland and open space preservation alternatives. This may require additional government resources to manage such as design consultants, design review committees or a landscape architect who can advise property owners on land development scenarios.

2. Educational Workshops. University Extension Agents, conservation organization representatives, experienced land owners, tax advisors and others can be invited to give presentations to local land owners in order to educate local officials and interested land owners. UW Extension can also be a resource for statewide 'webinar' events that offer statewide sharing of information and question and answer sessions at very reasonable costs.

(c) Financing Tools.

1. Use Value Assessment.

a. In 1974 the Wisconsin Legislature amended the Rule of Uniform Taxation (Article VIII, Section 1) in the Wisconsin Constitution to permit the preferential treatment of agricultural land. The 1995-1997 Budget Act changed the standard for assessing agricultural land in Wisconsin from market value to use value. The goal of this legislation, known as "use value assessment", was to protect Wisconsin's farm economy and curb urban sprawl by assessing farmland based upon its agricultural productivity, rather than its potential for development. Specifically, the value of agricultural land for assessment purposes was changed from market value to use value.

b. In a use value assessment system, the use of the land is the most important factor in determining its assessed value. Use value in Wisconsin is specific to land only. The use value legislation passed in 1995 requires that the assessed value of farmland be based on the income that could be generated from its rental for agricultural use. Income and rental from farming are a function of agricultural capability. Because any land could theoretically be used for agricultural purposes, statutes and administrative rules limit the benefit of use value assessment to only those lands that qualify as "land devoted primarily to agricultural use." The implementation of use-value assessment in Wisconsin has helped farmers maintain lower property taxes on their agricultural land.

2. Managed Forest Law.

a. Wisconsin's Managed Forest Law promotes sustainable forestry practices on private property by providing significant tax savings to property owners. Parcels with at least 10 acres of forestland used for wood products are eligible.

b. The goal of the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program is to encourage long-term sound forest management. MFL is a tax incentive program for industrial and non-industrial private woodland owners who manage their woodlands for forest products while also managing for water quality protection, wildlife habitat, and public recreation. In return for following an approved management plan, property taxes are set at a lower rate than normal.

(d) Planning Tools.

1. Comprehensive Plans.

a. Comprehensive Planning is an essential method of defining a long range, citizen driven vision for land use planning. Although the planning process is involved and can take a year or more to complete, depending on the size of the jurisdiction, a comprehensive, citizen driven plan that articulates a vision and the objectives required to implement the vision can be a very effective tool in shaping local land use policy and regulation. In addition, comprehensive plans can serve to assure granting agencies, conservation organizations and other potential partners in a publicly supported vision, resulting in a greater likelihood of participation by potential partners in farmland preservation. Comprehensive plans can also provide support to local decision making bodies when difficult land use decisions need to be made.

b. Under Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law, Wis. Stat. s. 66.1001, 9 elements must be included in a comprehensive plan: (issues and opportunities; housing; economic development; transportation; utilities and community facilities; agriculture, natural and cultural resources; land use; intergovernmental cooperation; and implementation. These 9 elements offer an organized method of comprehensively addressing and analyzing farmland preservation impacts on the community.

c. The State of Wisconsin Department of Administration commissioned the creation of element guides after the Comprehensive Planning legislation was passed in order to provide guidance on each section of the comprehensive plan. The "Guide to Planning for Agriculture in Wisconsin, 2002" is available online at the Department of Administration's website: [http://www.doa.state.wi.us/dir/documents/ag\\_guide.pdf](http://www.doa.state.wi.us/dir/documents/ag_guide.pdf). This element guide provides excellent guidance on farmland preservation inventory techniques and implementation strategies.

d. The land use element of a comprehensive plan typically includes an inventory of the planning area's resources. Modern Geographic Information Systems (G.I.S.) provide a valuable tool for analyzing land information data in layers to best understand where valuable agricultural resources exist.

e. Typically, the implementation element of a comprehensive plan will offer short, medium and long range objectives and an action plan to accomplish each objective, which can articulate the tools needed by community officials to accomplish the objective. This section is particularly helpful in setting annual priorities for the community and a quick reference for officials to understand the tools available to accomplish planning objectives.

2. Sewer Service Plans.

a. Wisconsin Administrative Code, NR 121 establishes sewer service area (SSA) planning in order to provide structure to wastewater treatment for both individual communities and communities sharing wastewater treatment facilities. The WDNR is responsible for working with local agencies to develop Sewer Service Area plans that guide publicly sewered growth to protect water quality.

b. Sewer service area planning helps protect communities from adverse water quality impacts by anticipating growth patterns in the planning area and making recommendations on growth patterns that best serve water quality goals. A sewer service area plan identifies land most suitable for new development and land use planning options that can mitigate adverse water quality impacts on the community. Plans typically identify environmentally sensitive areas where development would have an adverse impact upon water quality that may be considered for farmland preservation initiatives. Geographic information systems can be a useful tool in analyzing layers of geographic data that can serve both farmland preservation initiatives and water quality preservation goals.

(e) Regulatory Tools.

1. Definitions.

a. Use Value Assessment. The assessment of farmland based on agricultural production rather than on the potential for development.

b. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). The transmission of a parcel's bundle of development rights to another parcel slated for development in order to preserve an intended use such as agriculture on the transferring parcel.

c. Conservation Easement. A legal restriction recorded on a parcel intended to preserve the parcel from certain levels of development.

d. Urban Growth Boundary. A regional boundary placed to control urban sprawl and mandate certain levels of development density in and out of the boundary.

e. Conservation Subdivision. Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" Law defines a conservation subdivision as "a housing development in a rural setting characterized by compact lots and common open space, where the natural features of the land are maintained to the greatest extent possible".

2. Urban Growth Boundaries.

a. According to the Farmland Preservation Center, Wisconsin has seen the conversion of over 500,000 acres of agricultural land to urbanization since 1982 prompting debate over whether or not regulatory control over urban sprawl is necessary to protect prime agricultural lands around urban centers.

b. Urban growth boundaries are defined as a regional regulatory boundary that is set in place in an attempt to control urban sprawl and mandate certain land use densities in and out of the boundary. Urban growth boundaries are a planning tool that can serve to promote urbanization while protecting valuable agricultural assets in a region.

c. Arguments for urban growth boundaries cite the importance of promoting urban infill, utilizing existing infrastructure investment to its highest and best use and discouraging costly sprawl and protecting the rural aesthetic. Cons include the potential for higher real estate prices within the urban area and the removal of market options for land owners outside the boundary.

d. Urban growth boundaries must be considered carefully due to these factors and may be considered along with other tools such as the purchase of development rights (PDR) or conservation easements.

e. Urban growth boundaries are commonplace around the world from the "greenbelt" cities of Europe and Canada to Scandinavian countries which have a more abrupt transition from urban to rural land use patterns.

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3. Infill Development and Increased Densities in Urban Areas.

a. Local units of government may use density bonuses as part of their development review and/or subdivision approval process. This approach assumes that if specified criteria are met, then a proposed development would be approved with more use of a site (such as more dwelling units per acre) than would otherwise be permitted by the community. That is, greater development density would be allowed if certain conditions are met. These "density bonuses" are a form of incentive that a community can offer to a developer who does the kind of development that a community seeks. Thus, a local government can legally and equitably say to each developer: if you do what we would like in your development, then you can increase the amount of development and thereby pay for more of the improvements we request.

b. Density bonuses may be used to achieve a wide array of community objectives, such as preservation of agriculture land, open space, and view sheds, and conservation of wetlands, water bodies, forests, meadows and other natural features that the community values. A list of density bonus criteria is not a freestanding document, but would need to be incorporated into a community's subdivision, zoning, or other development review regulations.

(i) Allows for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas while providing development to occur on the property.

(ii) Does not impose any direct costs on landowners and developers.

(iii) Neighbors may oppose due to concerns of increased density of development.

(iv) May not be mandatory tool; thus there is little assurance that desired project designs will be implemented by developers.

(v) Can be difficult for local officials to enforce unless bonus criteria are clearly spelled out in an ordinance or policy document.

4. Traditional Agricultural Zoning.

a. Agricultural protection zoning designates agriculture as the preferred primary land use. Its defining characteristic is the extent to which it permits new non-agricultural development. It keeps agricultural land contiguous, maintains a sense of rural character, and prevents large-scale residential developments whose residents may find agricultural activities to be a nuisance. It usually establishes a large minimum requirement for parcel sizes, usually around 35 acres. This type of zoning, however, does not permanently preserve agricultural land and does not protect it from annexation. Its characteristics include:

(i) Helps prevent agricultural land from becoming fragmented by residential development.

(ii) Clearly identifies agriculture as primary land use.

(iii) Easily implemented by municipalities.

(iv) Able to protect large areas of agricultural land.

(v) Does not permanently preserve agricultural land.

(vi) Does not protect agricultural land from annexation.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(5)(e)4.b.

b. Large lot zoning, also known as low-density residential zoning, is a zoning technique creating lot sizes 40 acres or more. The perceived effectiveness of large lot zoning is based on the theory that limiting development density will preserve the open space and agricultural character of an area. The premise of large lot zoning is to select a minimum lot size that is large enough to prevent fragmentation of agriculture and to discourage non-farm homebuyers from purchasing land to build on in the country. Lot sizes ranging from 3 to 10 acre-lots have proven ineffective in preventing non-farm homebuyers from purchasing agricultural land for residential development. In areas where farmland preservation is particularly important to the community, individual lot sizes of 40 to 160 acres may be applicable. Minimum lot sizes in this range may be utilized by niche agricultural industries such as gardening and greenhouses.

c. Large lot zoning, however, is generally not considered to be an effective farmland preservation tool since low density development patterns create parcel sizes which are "too big to mow, but too little to plow". In areas of marginal farming production, this technique can have a detrimental effect by requiring large lots for individual homes and taking large parcels out of production for that purpose. This technique may be effective in maintaining rural character, but not farmland. Maintenance of rural character is enhanced if low residential densities are combined with conservation subdivision design in communities that wish to accommodate residential development.

5. Conservation Subdivision Design.

a. Conservation or cluster development is a development pattern for residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional uses, or a combination of these uses, in which buildings are grouped together rather than evenly spread over the land as in a conventional development. The intent of conservation development is to concentrate structures in those areas most suitable for building while preserving natural or cultural features residential conservation subdivisions cluster houses on smaller parcels of land while additional land that would have been allocated to individual lots is preserved as open space.

b. Conservation developments can keep land available for agricultural use, but generally the land is kept as open space. In a typical conservation subdivision, each homeowner has access to all of the open space areas, which may be permanently preserved by a conservation easement. To provide maximum protection of subdivision open space, the conservation easement should be assigned to organizations such as a homeowner's association, a government agency, or a land trust. This tool can achieve a variety of comprehensive planning objectives such as reducing the visual impacts of development, preserving rural character, natural features, environmentally sensitive lands, permanent open space or agricultural land, creating opportunities for nonpublic ownership of open space, and increasing the efficiency of infrastructure development.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(5)(e)5.c.

c. Figure 1 illustrates how conservation/cluster zoning can accommodate development and conserve natural/open spaces. Although not commonly done in Southeastern Wisconsin to date, conservation subdivisions can also reserve areas for farming within the subdivision as shown in Figure 2.

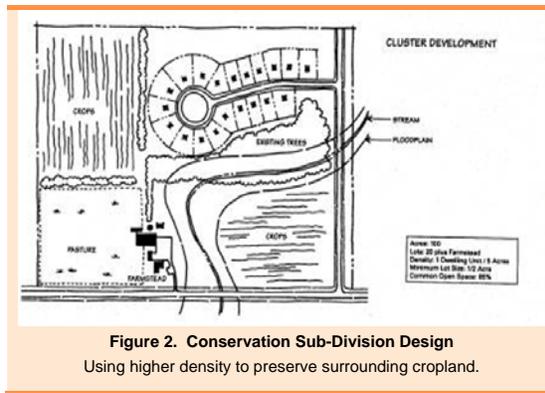


Figure 2. Conservation Sub-Division Design  
Using higher density to preserve surrounding cropland.

d. It is important that when implementing a conservation/cluster ordinance that a community incorporates design principles for rural character preservation such as preserving open space adjacent to existing perimeter roadways, clustering houses, separating cluster groups and providing open space adjacent to each lot. If design principles are not taken into account, developments may look more like a conventional subdivision layout and will not likely achieve the goal of preserving rural character.

e. The Town of Caledonia in Racine County provides a good example of a conservation subdivision ordinance (See Appendix B for Town of Caledonia ordinance). Conservation subdivisions can also be accommodated through a local zoning ordinance.

f. Benefits.

- (i) Helps maintain a rural character of an area.
- (ii) Provides permanent open space protection for a community.
- (iii) Protects best natural resources of an area.
- (iv) Developers may experience greater profits by selling parcels next to open space.
- (v) Reduces impact of development on watersheds.
- (vi) Less expensive to provide municipal public services to development depending on how clustering can be accomplished.

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g. Limitations.

- (i) Maintenance costs of created open space.
- (ii) Limited accessibility to low-income households.
- (iii) Protected land is typically owned by homeowners  
association – little to no public access.
- (iv) Improper implementation of tool may create  
conventional subdivisions.
- (v) Minimum lot sizes may not be small enough to offset  
costs of land preservation.
- (vi) Limits, but does not stop residential development in  
agricultural areas.

6. State-Certified Farmland Zoning.

a. La Crosse County has chosen to adopt and have a County-wide certified farmland preservation zoning ordinance to ensure that landowners covered by the ordinance are eligible to claim farmland preservation tax credits, (Chapter 91, Wis. Stats.). Certification of a local farmland preservation zoning ordinance must be obtained through application to the department. A farmland preservation zoning ordinance does not qualify for certification under s. 91.36, if the farmland preservation zoning ordinance allows a land use in a farmland preservation zoning district other than the following:

- i. Agricultural uses.
- ii. Accessory uses.
- iii. Agriculture–related uses.
- iv. Nonfarm residences constructed in a rural residential  
cluster.
- v. Undeveloped natural resource and open space areas.
- vi. A transportation, utility, communication, or other use.
- vii. Other uses identified by the department by rule.

b. Farmland Preservation Areas. As part of certified Zoning, there are 2 Farmland Preservation Areas mapped in La Crosse County. These mapped “Tiers” are administered using program incentives, but also, specially certified County Zoning Ordinances. The following is a description of the Tiers:

i. Farmland Preservation Area Tier I. Land Uses in Tier 1 include All agricultural uses, including farmsteads, agri-business, agricultural buildings, primary residences, limited additional residential uses, wetlands, open water, open space and all other areas not planned for any type of development other than agriculture and agri-business. This area was delineated using the criteria adopted by the Farmland Preservation Steering Committee. All available farmland preservation program incentives, including income tax credits, should be made available on a voluntary basis to landowners within Tier I areas.

ii. Farmland Preservation Area Tier II. Land Uses within Tier II include all of the land uses as in the Tier I area. The only exception is that the vacant land in the Tier II category has been identified by the County Future Land Use Map as planned for future non-agricultural development. This development, however, is not projected to occur within the next 15-years. Therefore, these Tier II areas can benefit from short term farmland preservation program incentives. The short term incentives would include state approved tax credits, agricultural enterprise areas, and Farmland Preservation Zoning. They would not include Purchase of Development Rights. These Tier II areas must also remain within a certified farmland preservation zoning district while they receive program incentives. Periodically, when the County Farmland Preservation Plan is updated, portions of this Tier II area must be remapped, based on the 15-year forecasted land use demand. Only short term farmland preservation program incentives should be made available on a voluntary basis to landowners within this Tier II area.

7. Transfer of Development Rights.

a. The County could establish a program that allows individuals to shift a "bundle" of development rights from a parcel in a defined "sending" area to a parcel in a defined "receiving" area, an area designated as appropriate for development. This allows a community to preserve natural features and agricultural land, while at the same time, helps it to concentrate development around existing population centers and infrastructure. The process is managed through dual zoning that provides property owners a choice whether or not to participate. Owners who sell development rights are properly compensated without having to endure complications of actually developing the site. They can also continue to generate income from agricultural, forestry, or other natural land uses. It is noted that because of this complexity, TDR's require additional government resources to manage and are only feasible in areas where there is pressure for high density urban development.

b. The Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a tool that establishes areas within a community, called zones, that define areas for preservation (sending zones), and areas for more growth (receiving zones). Sending zones can be areas of agricultural land, open space, historic properties or any other properties that are important to the community.

c. Receiving zones are areas that the community has designated as appropriate for development. Often these areas are selected because they are located close to existing development, jobs, shopping, schools, transportation, infrastructure and other urban services.

d. In a traditional TDR program, sending area properties are rezoned to a form of dual zoning that gives the property owners a choice. The owners can choose not to participate in the TDR program and instead use and develop their land as allowed under the baseline zoning. Alternatively, they can voluntarily elect to use the TDR option. Under the TDR option, the sending site owner enters into a deed restriction that spells out the amount of future development and the types of land use activities that can occur on the property. When that deed restriction is recorded, the sending site owner is able to sell a commodity created by the community's TDR ordinance called a transferable development right or a "TDR". By selling their TDR's, sending site owners often are fully compensated for the development potential of their property without having to endure the expense and uncertainty of actually trying to develop it. Also, when the sending sites have income-producing potential from non-urban uses, such as farming or forestry, the owners can continue to receive that income. A traditional TDR ordinance creates a form of dual zoning for receiving areas as well. Developers can elect not to use the TDR option provided under this dual zoning. Under the baseline option, they do not have to acquire TDR's, but they also are limited to a lower, less-profitable level of development. Under the TDR option, developers buy and retire a specified number of TDR's in order to

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(5)(e)7.d.

achieve a higher, more-profitable level of development. The price of TDR's is typically freely negotiated between willing buyers and sellers. The TDR ordinance can influence the price through the number of TDR's that the sending site owners are allowed to sell. When TDR's remain affordable, developers are able to achieve higher profits through the extra development allowed under the TDR option despite the additional cost of the TDR's.

- pressures.
- (i) Permanently protects land from development
  - (ii) Landowner is paid to protect their land.
  - (iii) Local government can target locations effectively.
  - (iv) Low cost to local unit of government.
  - (v) Utilizes free market mechanisms.
  - (vi) Land remains in private ownership and on tax roll.
  - (vii) Can be complex to manage.
  - (viii) Receiving area must be willing to accept higher densities.
  - (ix) Difficult program to establish, especially in areas without county zoning.
  - (x) Program will not work in rural areas where there is little to no development pressure on the area to be preserved.
  - (xi) Limited to cities/villages/towns, no statutory authorization in Wisconsin for county-wide program.
  - (xii) May require cooperative agreements among several local governments to establish sending and receiving zones.
- (f) Right-To-Farm Laws.

1. The County should be proactive in distributing information on policies that protect agricultural activities from overly restrictive land-use regulations. These state laws protect agricultural activities from threat of nuisance-based lawsuits. The County may consider requiring those selling property near farms to disclose information about these laws.

2. Right-to-farm laws are a state policy that states commercial agriculture is an important activity. The statutes help support the economic viability of farming by discouraging neighbors from filing lawsuits against agricultural operations. Twenty-three right-to-farm laws also prohibit local governments from enacting ordinances that would impose unreasonable restrictions on agriculture.

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3. Wisconsin's "Right-to-Farm Law" (Wis. Stat. s. 823.08) was enacted in 1981 to protect farmers from lawsuits, or the threat of lawsuits, where a plaintiff alleges that a normal farming practice poses a nuisance. The law was designed to protect farm operations, which use good management practices from nuisance lawsuits that challenge acceptable farming practices and the ability of farmers to responsibly continue producing food and fiber. The "Right-to-Farm Law" was strengthened in 1995 to provide recourse for farmers to collect on expenses they incurred from frivolous nuisance lawsuits brought against their operations.

4. Local communities may supplement the protection provided by the State with their own, more protective ordinance. Local ordinances may require that buyers of land in agricultural areas be provided with an Agricultural Nuisance Notice. Such notices inform buyers of agricultural land that agriculture is the primary economic activity of the area and that the buyer may experience inconvenience or discomfort arising from accepted agricultural practices. In some cases, the notice may be recorded on the deeds to new homes. Such notices may help to ensure that people who purchase houses in agricultural areas will recognize, and be more tolerant of, the sometimes inconvenient impacts of agricultural activities.

(g) Voluntary Tools.

1. PACE Program.

a. As part of the 2009 Working Lands Initiative, the State of Wisconsin established the Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program to help fund the acquisition of farmland in the state to permanently protect it from development. Conservation easements are legally-binding (recorded on the property deed), voluntary agreements between a property owner and government institution that places restrictions on the use and development of that property. They are usually structured in perpetuity, but may be for a predefined term. Easements may also only include parts of property instead of the entire parcel. Property owners may benefit from tax incentives.

b. This program is a voluntary program, compensating landowners for their willingness to limit future non-farm development. The compensation is based on a professional appraisal, which determines the value of the easement. That appraised value is estimated as the difference between the value of the land for development, and its value for farming. This voluntary incentive program is primarily financed by a grant from the state of Wisconsin. A local agency, usually a local unit of government or a non-profit conservation organization, assists the landowner in applying for a grant award from the state. This award can be matched by a federal grant award, local grant dollars, or even the landowner. The local agency then uses these grant dollars to negotiate an offer to purchase the easement. A real estate transaction then occurs between the landowner and the local agency. This easement purchase is then recorded and placed on the deed of the property; the easement is to go with the deed in perpetuity. There are typically no stipulations for public access, hunting rights or other activities, which the landowner may consider to be invasive. Because this is a voluntary program, negotiated between 2 willing parties, the terms must be acceptable to both. More information can be found at <http://Workinglands@wisconsin.gov>.

c. Benefits of Purchasing Agricultural Conservations Easements include:

(i) Perpetual protection of farmland for agricultural production.

(ii) Confidence by Ag landowners that conflicting development and land uses will not occur in the future.

of capital. (iii) The agriculture economy is bolstered by an infusion

public receives in open space and rural character. (iv) A landowner is compensated for the benefits the

levels. (v) Minimizes urban sprawl and increases urban density

services. (vi) Increases the efficiency of delivery of government

development driven infrastructure. (vii) Minimizes public investment in additional

PACE Grants? d. What are some criteria for delineation areas that qualify for

(i) Productive, prime, or unique soils.

(ii) Farmland faced with development pressure.

of a comprehensive plan. (iii) Preserved farmland that will compliment and be part

efforts by creating a block of agricultural land. (iv) Agricultural land that compliments other preservation

help keep the land in active production. (v) Agricultural land that utilizes other programs, which

sources to assist in the easement purchase. (vi) Agricultural land that has matching funds from other

resources. (vii) Land with important conservation features/ natural

## 2. Agricultural Enterprise Areas.

a. An agricultural enterprise area (AEA) is a significant prong of the 2009 Working Lands Initiation. By definition, an AEA is a contiguous land area devoted primarily to agricultural use and locally targeted for agricultural preservation and agri-business development. In 2009 a pilot program was authorized to establish 15 AEAs in the state of no more than 200,000 acres. The pilot program is to run 2 years.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(5)(g)2.b.

b. If successful, the state will allow up to 1,000,000 acres to be placed in AEAs statewide. If land is in an AEA, subject to a farmland preservation agreement, and meets eligibility and conservation requirements, the farmer can receive a tax credit of \$5 per acre. Land in an AEA is not required to be within a certified farmland preservation zoning district. However, if it is, the tax credit can go up to \$10 per acre. The designation of an AEA is voluntary and can be initiated by landowners by filing a petition with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Petitions filed with DATCP must meet minimum criteria, but additional evaluation criteria may be used to review competing petitions. As a minimum, the land subject of the petition must be identified as being in a farmland preservation area in the county's farmland preservation plan, be a contiguous land area, and primarily be used for agriculture. There must be a minimum of 5 separate landowners who sign the petition. Petitioners must also gain support from the local political sub-divisions, (towns and villages.) Once an AEA is accepted and established, the landowners will sign a farmland preservation agreement, in order to collect the tax credits, and continue to promote agricultural land use within the AEA. More information can be found at <http://Workinglands@wisconsin.gov>.

c. Purposes.

- (i) The preservation of valuable agricultural land use.
- (ii) Promotion of agri-business.
- (iii) Cooperation between the AEA landowners.
- (iv) Additional tax credits to landowners to infuse capital

into the local agricultural economy.

3. Federal Programs.

a. The Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP) provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and rangeland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with State, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. USDA provides up to 50% of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement.

b. To qualify, farmland must meet the following requirements:

- (i) Be part of a pending offer from a State, tribe, or local farmland protection program;
- (ii) Be privately owned;
- (iii) Have a conservation plan for highly erodible land;
- (iv) Be large enough to sustain agricultural production;
- (v) Be accessible to markets for what the land produces;
- (vi) Have adequate infrastructure and agricultural support services; and,
- (vii) Have surrounding parcels of land that can support long-term agricultural production.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(5)(g)3.b.(vii).

Depending on funding availability, proposals must be submitted by the eligible entities to the appropriate NRCS State Office during the application window. More information at: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp).

4. Bargain Sales and Property Donations.

a. If there is a willing seller, a government institution or non-government (conservation) organization may consider permanent protection by purchasing full title to property, which includes the full “bundle of development rights” that come with it. The parties may also structure transaction as a “bargain sale”, where the owner sells at a below-market price, and contributes the remaining value as a charitable gift, which the owner can claim as an income tax deduction. The buyer can also consider leasing land back to previous owner to generate rent. Fee-simple purchase work best in time-sensitive situations or where there is a vision of community use for the land. The buyer should consider the increased costs of owning land and government institutions should note that a purchase may lower value of parcel, thereby reducing tax revenues. This loss may be offset, however, as it may increase the property values of adjoining parcels.

b. There may be instances where a property owner seeks to transfer his/her land title to a government institution or non-government (conservation) organization as a charitable gift (or to benefit from tax incentives). This donation may take place immediately, or be a reserved life estate, where the owner continues to own and live on property until death. The recipient should consider that more resources may be needed for continued operation and maintenance of the property.

(h) Summary of Tools Available for Town/County Implementation. Table 5.1 provides a summary of those tools that the towns and the County can use to protect farmland from development.

**Table 5-1. Summary of Farmland Protection Tools Available for Town/County Implementation**

Tool	Benefits	Limitations	Funding Requirements and Availability	Status of Current Implementation
“Options” Review for Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides opportunity to incorporate farmland and open space preservation into a development project</li> <li>Voluntary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voluntary nature</li> <li>Can result in sized Farmland Parcels</li> <li>may not be permitted by local regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no additional funding would be required if able to manage with existing staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently not a required step in the development review process</li> </ul>
Sewer Service Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrains development from encroaching on agricultural and other natural lands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not ensure long-term protection</li> <li>Only defines higher density development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current cost is an on-going expense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Already in practice</li> </ul>
Urban Growth Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish clear line between growth and preservation areas</li> <li>Promote efficient use of exist. infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>difficult to reach agreement boundaries</li> <li>Require additional regulations to implement</li> <li>Would need to amend comprehensive plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for amending comprehensive plans and implementation would be required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not being done</li> </ul>
Infill Development and Increased Densities in Urban Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efficient use of exist. infrastructure</li> <li>Does not impose any direct costs on property owners or developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nearby residents may oppose increased density</li> <li>Does not help to ensure preservation if density bonuses are not mandatory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aside from potentially revising local regulations, no additional funding would be required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some municipalities along with La Crosse County encourage infill in their comprehensive plans</li> </ul>
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanently protects farmland</li> <li>Farmers get “development value”</li> <li>targets specific areas for protection</li> <li>Land remains on tax rolls and in private ownership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation can be complex and an ongoing commitment</li> <li>May be difficult to craft a countywide program including cities and villages</li> <li>Nearby residents may oppose increased density</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost involved with revising local regulations</li> <li>Would likely require additional institutional resources to manage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not being done – there are a few examples elsewhere in Wisconsin</li> </ul>
Conservation Subdivision Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanently protects farmland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ongoing maintenance obligations for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aside from potentially revising local regulations,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not a general requirement but</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes more efficient use of new transportation and utility infrastructure</li> <li>May increase values of adjacent residential properties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>homeowners association</li> <li>May be limited access to open space</li> <li>May limit home ownership opportunities for some households</li> </ul>	no additional funding would be required	authorized in the updated zoning ordinance
Traditional Zoning – Minimum Lot Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can slow the rate of fragmentation of larger agricultural parcels</li> <li>Institutionally feasible for local governments to implement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May encourage low-density development</li> <li>Does not ensure permanent preservation</li> <li>May increase costs of infrastructure</li> </ul>	No additional funding required	Already in practice
State-Certified Farmland Zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property owners are eligible to receive state income tax benefit</li> <li>Allows non-farm land divisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not ensure permanent protection</li> <li>Conversion fee required if rezoning is approved by the jurisdiction</li> </ul>	Land development regulations would need to be revised to meet state requirements and certification process	Already in practice
PACE Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property owner is eligible to receive income tax benefit</li> <li>Permanently protects farmland</li> <li>Can reduce future land-use conflicts</li> <li>Land remains in private ownership and on tax rolls</li> <li>Voluntary involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires two willing parties</li> <li>Negotiations may be complex</li> <li>A competitive process is used to only fund the top-rated applications – state funding is not guaranteed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Petitioner needs to secure 50 percent of the cost of the easement cost from a participating entity such as a local or statewide land trust or a governmental jurisdiction</li> </ul>	This is a new state program already authorized and administered by La Crosse County
Designation as an Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property owner is eligible to receive income tax benefit</li> <li>Promotes agricultural businesses</li> <li>Voluntary involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not ensure permanent protection</li> <li>Difficult to find qualified and willing areas</li> <li>Agreement is for 15 years</li> <li>only funds the top-rated applications</li> </ul>	No governmental expenditure required other than the adoption of a resolution of County Board supporting the petitioner's application for designation as an AEA	Not being done

(6) Implementation.

(a) Chapter Overview. The farmland preservation plan, by its nature, covers a wide number of topics. Although there is much to address, it is also necessary to identify the most important issues. This helps to focus our goals, recommendations and implementation strategies. The plan will develop detailed recommendations that address the following.

1. Varied Growth Management Needs. Address the growth management and land use planning needs of urban, rural, and suburban regions in the County. For example, by increasing demand and density in the urban and suburban areas, the demand will be reduced in the rural areas, promoting the preservation of important farmland.

2. Quality of Life. Identify the distinct factors that contribute to the livability of La Crosse County. Evaluate and develop strategies to maintain and enhance these features.

3. Improved Local & County Decision Making. Develop a framework that encourages informed planning, zoning, and development review decisions at the local level. Continue to support County coordination, oversight, and facilitation of these efforts.

4. Policies for Agricultural Transition Areas. Develop clear criteria to guide any changes in areas that are currently agricultural use, but planned for other uses after the 15 year window. As this is a 10-year plan, consider both short and long-term policy.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(6)(a)5.

5. Prime and Productive Agricultural Lands. Develop realistic strategies to protect prime and productive agricultural lands from the encroachment of development. Define and differentiate between lands with high and marginal agricultural value.

6. Maintain Natural Resources. Continue to protect the various natural resources that exist in different parts of the County as they significantly contribute to the quality of life. Promote consistency among different standards managed at the Federal, State, County, and local levels.

7. Regional Economic Coordination. Identify strategies that promote cooperation in economic development efforts that promote the agricultural economy. Include local and county governments and all levels of educational institutions within and adjacent to La Crosse County.

8. Strategy for Transportation Options. Plan for a variety of viable transportation options that meet the projected needs of residents and businesses. This transportation infrastructure should be designed with agriculture in mind, and not fragment viable agricultural operations.

9. Efficient and Effective Services. Maintain the efficiency and quality of County services while identifying areas for improvement.

10. Implementation. Identify feasible implementation tools that the County and local governments can utilize to implement the plan.

(b) LESA Analysis.

1. As a precursor to the farmland preservation planning effort, several members of the farmland preservation Committee served as a portion of a committee that formulated a LESA analysis for La Crosse County. The results of this analysis are listed below.

2. To utilize a LESA model to rank the quality of a parcel in La Crosse County as a "High Priority Working Land," for its preservation using the PACE program. Our Committee's Goal was set early as follows: "Designate high priority working lands for protection from non-agricultural development, through a Purchase of Agriculture Conservation Easement (PACE) Program."

3. This LESA model has a map (Map 6.1) that should be easily accessible to all landowners to understand their rating. This map was generated based on hard criteria that were developed by the LESA committee. We would recommend that you utilize the following criteria that we as a committee have developed through consensus.

4. Nine LESA criteria for evaluating working lands for PACE:

- a. Soils – 30%
- b. Stewardship (Watershed Quality) – 15%
- c. Future Land Use Designation – 14%
- d. Proximity to Protected Working Lands – 10%
- e. Proximity to Developed Land – 10%
- f. Proximity to Protected or Important Open Space – 7%

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(6)(b)4.g.

- g. Irrigation Availability – 5%
- h. Distances to Urban Services – 5%
- i. Size of Base Farm Tract – 4%
- j. Total - 100%

5. We would also recommend that you appoint a Farmland Preservation Committee (FPC) to review applicants for this PACE program based on the above criteria, and a set of "soft" criteria which evaluates the applicants for PACE as they relate to each other (each applicant of that enrollment period). Even though we recommend a very public evaluation process with significant transparency of every decisions made, the LESA committee members were not convinced that just using the above 9 criteria would give this FPC the ability to make an accurate assessment of all applicants. The additional evaluation using the following soft criteria will allow the FPC to consider additional information. It is important that the hard criteria are considered the primary criteria, and would recommend that they be considered at least 80% of the decision, and that the soft criteria be secondary, utilizing them for 20% of the scoring. We would also recommend that certain of the soft criteria be of greater importance and weight and others be of lesser importance. We would recommend that you consider the following "Soft Criteria" for the FPC's final evaluation process in combination with the above mentioned "Hard Criteria":

6. Potential Additional Criteria for Evaluation PACE Applicants:

- a. The personal commitment of the landowner to farmland preservation.
- b. The landowner's commitment to allow varying levels of public access to the site. This includes the educational, historic or cultural significance of the site.
- c. Conservation ethic and compliance of the landowner.
- d. Willingness to donate a portion of the value of the Conservation Easement.
- e. Value of farming practice (value added farming, organic, etc).
- f. Special circumstances (Conservation Easement may accomplish land use goals).
- g. The value of the site to the local economy, job creation, retention, etc.
- h. The landowner's final personal statement making a case as to why this site should receive the public's investment in the PACE program.

(c) Issues, Opportunities and Trends.

1. Throughout the planning process a range of issues and opportunities were identified and are described in this section. Most of these relate specifically to agriculture, while some relate to the state's farmland preservation program and its implementation. They are grouped together for organizational purposes.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(6)(c)1.a.

a. Organic foods. In recent years, the demand for organic food has been steadily increasing. While some consumers have always been interested in eating a healthy diet, commercial food stores are now stocking and promoting a growing variety of organic foods.

b. Eat local. When you buy direct from local farmers, your dollars stay within your community, and strengthen the local economy. More than 90¢ of every dollar you spend goes to the farmer, thus preserving farming as a livelihood and farmland. This is important because as mergers in the food industry have increased, the portion of your food dollar paid to farmers has decreased. Vegetable farmers earn only 21¢ of your dollar; the other 79¢ goes to pay for marketing, distribution, and other costs.

c. Food as medicine. Increasingly, food is not only as necessary for sustenance, it is seen as vital for maintaining good health. (See inset box)

d. Distrust of state programs. Some farmers harbor a strong distrust of state programs and regulator controls. In order to overcome this and ensure participation, this plan will need to fully and transparently inform landowners of the programs components. Even then, some landowners will continue to be unwilling.

e. Conservation compliance – Under the Working Lands Program, farmers who claim a farmland preservation tax credit must comply with state soil and water conservation standards. Some farmers view conservation compliance as a cost prohibitive to implement nutrient management plans, a conservation plan and implementation of appropriate conservation practices. It will be important to utilize local staff, and cost share programs to include additional incentive for this level of compliance. Please refer to The La Crosse County Land and Water Resources Management Plan - 2011 for details on the administration of this important feature of Farmland Preservation in La Crosse County.

f. Incentives too low. It has become clear that many landowners feel the incentive to participate in these programs is not at a sustainable level. This will continue to be a difficult discussion, due to the current economic conditions and the resulting lack of political support for increased incentive levels.

g. Wait and see attitude. Some farmers indicated that they would wait to see how farmland preservation is implemented on the county level and how the state proceeds before they decide if they want to be “in” or “out” of a farmland preservation area. During the meetings, County staff and the consultant reiterated that getting in after the plan is adopted is not necessarily that easy. The mapped farmland preservation areas may need to be redrawn which would potentially affect the criteria used to define the farmland preservation areas in the first place.

h. Extraterritorial jurisdiction of cities and villages. Once a positive tool for planning development in Wisconsin, extra-territorial subdivision jurisdiction allows those incorporated municipalities adjacent to Wisconsin towns to have a signature and approval process for subdivisions proposed within those towns. This tool has now become a divisive argument creating animosity between towns and incorporated municipalities due to the political leveraging and animosity created by strong annexation legislation. The farmland preservation planning process should encourage additional boundary agreement discussions, the importance of mutual respect between municipalities, and the importance of continued farmland preservation, even in extra-territorial jurisdictions.

i. Local control. Throughout the preparation, review, and adoption of this plan, there was 1 common theme – retain local control and input. The County’s comprehensive plan was built on the direct input from the towns and the future land use maps prepared by the towns.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(6)(c)1.j.

j. Declining numbers of farmers and farm workers. Since the industrial revolution in the United States, the proportion of those earning their livelihood from agriculture has been declining. In the past 40 years, the United States has lost 800,000 farmers and ranchers.

k. Aging of farm operators. Farmers are aging. From 2002 to 2007, the average age of a farmer increased from age 55 to 57. And the number of farmers aged 75 years or older increased by 20% over the same period, meanwhile, the number of operators under 25 years of age decreased by 30%.

l. Size of operations. As is true in many economic sectors, the size of farm operations in acres per operation has increased. Farm consolidation has been an ongoing trend. Expanded operations take advantage of economies of scale. While most operations have grown in size, there have been an increasing number of small operations who do not require a large land base. Those growing a specialty crop are prime examples.

m. Specialization. Farming operations in Wisconsin have historically been diversified. It was not uncommon for a farm to raise a variety of crops and animals. Increasingly the norm is to specialize in a particular area. For example, those in the dairy industry may specialize as a calving operation. Mega dairies and milk processing facilities have also seen a strong increase over the past 10 years. See the grant below: The competitive Special Agricultural Facility Grant funding, allocated in the 2009-2011 budget, will provide \$3.1 million in support for a \$47.2 million expansion in Appleton that would increase milk processing capacity by 1.5 million pounds per day at Foremost Farms USA – a dairy cooperative headquartered in Wisconsin. Construction is expected to employ 60 to 70 workers for over a year, and the expanded capacity is expected to create 35 additional full-time jobs at the plant, which currently employs 91.

n. Commodity prices. In the past 2 years, cash receipts for crops statewide rose 34% with corn up 46% and soybeans up 24%. This has spurred a slow-down in acres being diverted from agriculture to development. In La Crosse County in 2008, there were only 36 acres diverted from agriculture. Statewide, the number of acres being diverted from agriculture decreased 43% and the value of agricultural land rose 12%. This is due to the slow economy in development and the economy of commodities finally catching up to modern values. However, we cannot expect this trend to continue and must use this short reprieve to put in place farmland preservation measures.

o. On-farm energy production. Production of energy from farm resources such as ethanol is making news, but another source of energy is sometimes forgotten. A company called USEMCO from Tomah, WI has developed an anaerobic digester to efficiently process electricity from manure generated at an average size dairy farm. The following grant was awarded to USEMCO in 2009: a \$200,000 project conducted by USEMCO in Tomah to develop and demonstrate an anaerobic digester that is cost effective for small farms. Wisconsin has nearly 13,000 dairy farms, with an average herd size of fewer than 100 cows. By bringing the economy of scale down for manure digesters, many more farms will have the ability to take a potential disposal cost and turn it into a source of homegrown, renewable energy.

p. International trading policies. Agricultural export opportunities are hindered by daunting MRL challenges due to confusing and burdensome import regulations on pesticide residue levels for U.S. ag exports. Agricultural trade operates in a global market and is subject to the capricious nature of governments, weather and evolving trade agreements. Economic development policies for agriculture in La Crosse County should explore the ever-changing landscape of commodity markets and offer insight in ways to take advantage of international trade.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(6)(c)1.q.

q. Perceived decline in agriculture's role in economic structure of La Crosse County. There is a general perception that the agricultural sector is not important to the County's overall economic strategy. As the importance of other economic sectors have grown in scale and influence in the County and region, the role of the agricultural sector in the local economy has diminished.

r. Important Trends. All of the above indicate important trends in farming practices. Of utmost importance is to point out and plan for those trends that will assist in the future preservation of farming for our community. The trends that this Committee feels most important to recognize and utilize in our preservation practices include specialization, higher commodity prices and a reduction in the demand on conversion of agricultural lands, and an increase in the demand for locally grown organic products for human consumption. We will need to pay attention to the demographics of farm workers, and reduce the perception that farming is not important in our local economy. All of our efforts need to take a comprehensive approach to continue to improve the economic climate for farming and reduce the development pressure which will assist in limiting the number of acres converting from farmland into another form of development.

(d) Goals, Objectives, and Policies. Overall goal to acknowledge that the general physical characteristics of La Crosse County, being its topography and access to natural resources, has greatly influenced the patterns of social and economic development presently existing in La Crosse County. It is desirable to preserve our land and water based resources and to do so will preserve the quality of life in La Crosse County.

1. Additional Goals:

- a. Preserve the rural character of large areas of La Crosse County.
  - (i) Utilize farmland preservation tools encouraging landowners to preserve their farms'.
  - (ii) Encourage landowners to cooperate to preserve contiguous tracts.
  - (iii) Utilize zoning and subdivision ordinances to protect areas planned for agriculture.
- b. Preserve a strong agricultural economy.
  - (i) Promote educational tools to encourage "Buy Local" programs.
  - (ii) Provide incentives to promote value added agriculture.
  - (iii) Maintain Use Value Assessment.
  - (iv) Promote home based businesses in agricultural areas.
- c. Preserve a healthy natural environment.
  - (i) Provide additional funding and technical assistance for conservation practices.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(6)(d)1.c.(ii)

- (ii) Promote the preservation of open space, and agricultural land adjacent to important resources.
- (iii) Promote sustainable agriculture, organic practices and local food supply planning.
- d. Promote a strong balance of landowner rights and community benefit.
  - (i) Ensure that the public participation is encouraged and utilized in drafting plans.
  - (ii) Promote open and transparent government.
  - (iii) Policy must be made while respecting the landowner's comments.
- e. Foster effective, cooperative government units.
  - (i) Include all levels of local government in decisions.
  - (ii) Respect the activities of local governments.
  - (iii) Build open, honest and supportive relationships between government units.
  - (iv) Collaborate, cooperate and compromise.
- f. Support agriculturally related businesses.
  - (i) Promote Agricultural Enterprise Areas.
  - (ii) Educate the public on the benefits of local agri-business.
  - (iii) Support agri-business with technical assistance and revolving loan funds.
  - (iv) Include agriculture in economic development discussions.
- g. Promote aesthetic beauty and bluffland preservation.
  - (i) Support public/ private partnerships which promote bluffland preservation.
  - (ii) Promote an active recreational use of preserved blufflands.
- h. Respect local comprehensive plans and encourage development that is consistent with those Plans.
  - (i) Ensure that the Farmland Preservation Plan and Comprehensive Plans are consistent.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(6)(d)1.h.(ii)

(ii) Promote development with density bonuses and streamlined approval processes in areas planned for development.

(e) Designation of Farmland Preservation Areas.

1. Below are the adopted criteria for the designation of FPA's. These criteria, once adopted allowed the steering committee to draft an appropriate map of these areas. "The criteria were developed with assistance from similar criteria from a number of other counties in the state in a similar time frame of adopting farmland preservation plans. These criteria, however, are unique to La Crosse County, showing respect to public input activities, and the unique personality of the County itself.

2. Criteria for Delineating Farmland Preservation Areas. The Committee used the LESA Criteria as approved by the LESA committee and the Planning Resources and Development Committee of La Crosse County, and the above goals for farmland preservation as their basis for adopting the following 6 criteria listed below for mapping Farmland Preservation Areas:

a. Farmland Preservation Plan Criteria

- (i) Productive agricultural soils (See Map 3.2)
- (ii) Consistent With Future Land Use Plan (See Map 2.2)
- (iii) Large contiguous Farmland Preservation Areas (See Map 3.3)
- (iv) Proximity to protected or important open space (See Map 3.4)
- (v) Consideration of landowner interests
- (vi) Cooperative input from local municipalities

b. Upon determination of the above 6 criteria, it became evident that the Committee needed a method to evaluate the importance of each individual criteria, and utilize a prioritized decision making method for designating the Farmland Preservation Areas. We met several times to discuss this mapping process. In the end we settled on the process of utilizing maps, spreadsheets with data, staff expertise and further research. This process was by far the most time consuming and difficult process of completing this Farmland Preservation Plan. Once the map was completed, however, it was also the most rewarding process. Following is a brief description of the steps taken to designate the map.

(i) First, the Committee determined that it was important for the soils to be productive for successful farming. Therefore the Committee discussed removing areas that were of very poor soil types. Those soils that were found to be so poor that agricultural production was severely limited, however, were important for farmland preservation because they were typically rocky and steep. In the County's Future Land Use Map these soils were shown as important for open space are, therefore, also shown in the Farmland Preservation Areas map as Farmland Preservation Areas, because of their importance as open space. Since La Crosse County has a limited percentage of class 1 soils, the Committee felt that it was very important to preserve as many acres of class 1 soils as possible. At the same time, many of these soils are within very close proximity to developing municipalities. Therefore, we utilized the LESA analysis that was completed to determine proper locations for preservation of these class 1 soils. This balancing of criteria extended our debate, but produced a high quality plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(6)(e)2.b.(ii)

(ii) Second, we looked at the Future Land Use Map to find areas that were not planned for development. These areas not planned for development became potential Tier 1, areas. Again, further separation will occur as we get to other criteria. We then determined where the areas resided that may be planned, in the longer term for development, and where they would not develop for at a minimum of 15 years. These areas quickly became potential Tier 2 areas as shown in the following paragraphs. The Committee removed those areas that were planned for development in the near future.

(iii) Third, the Committee felt it was important to preserve large blocks of farmland to promote a long term culture of farming and provide the proper infrastructure to ensure farming success. These areas are very evident on the plan maps. La Crosse County is developing in a T-shaped pattern. This pattern is due to public infrastructure and historic patterns of development. The T-shaped area of development then separates the remainder of the County into 3 large blocks of farmland preservation, north and east of the T, south and east of the T, and west of the T. These 3 large blocks of preserved land will assist in creating a "frame" effect of farmland and open space for production, but also the enjoyment of those residents of La Crosse County to dwell in the dense urban areas that make up the "T."

(iv) Fourth, we utilized our GIS mapping information to assist us in finding those areas of contiguous natural resource or open space that were in public control and contiguous to mapped Farmland Preservation Areas. These contiguous open space areas were added as Tier 1 Areas, and as stated above include some very poor soils.

(v) Fifth, the Committee felt it very important to show early success with the program, and so it felt that giving some weight to the criteria of landowner interest was important. It was very significant to the Committee that certain landowner were past participants, and, therefore, very likely to continue the program in the future. We determined that some landowners, even if they did not currently have the appropriate zoning to participate in the farmland preservation program, would have a significant likelihood of participating in the future. These areas were assumed to be pursuing a future farmland preservation zoning district, and to minimize a significant amount of amendments to the farmland preservation plan over the next few years, the Committee decided to include these likely areas within the mapped Farmland Preservation Areas.

(vi) Sixth, the Committee discussed the mapped Farmland Preservation Areas with the local municipalities. These municipalities had opportunities at numerous public informational meetings, and through their representation on the Committee to provide input into the planning process. This collaborative relationship will be very important as we pursue farmland preservation activities into the future.

(vii) Finally, the Committee looked at the minimum standards in the Wisconsin State Statutes and determined if the areas that were delineated for a Farmland Preservation Area met with these minimum statutory standards. We utilized the following 2 tier approach to separate the Farmland Preservation Areas to clearly delineate the programs available, both at the local and state level, to assist in preserving the farmland. These mapped "Tiers" are administered by providing program incentives, and enforcing certified zoning ordinances. The Farmland Preservation Area Tiers are described on page 26.

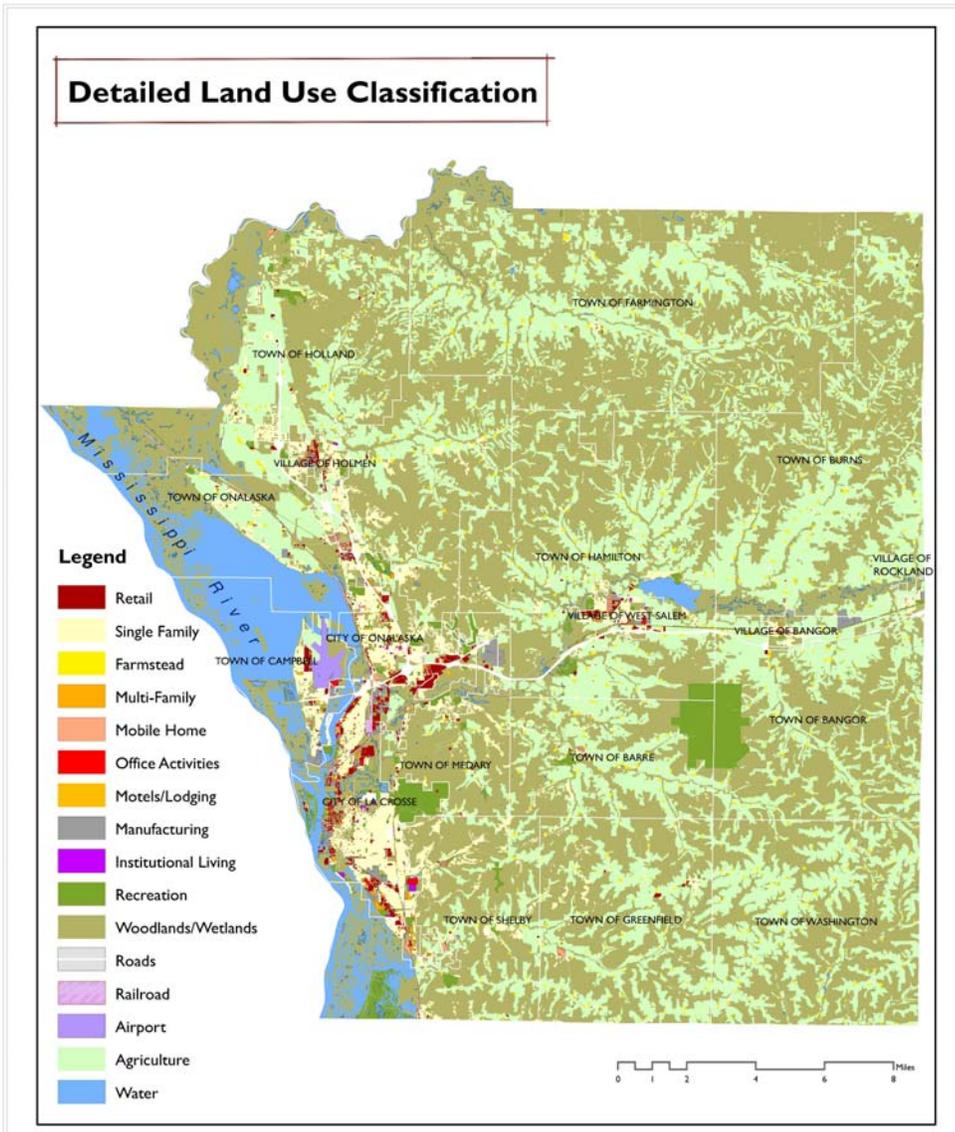
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06(6)(e)2.b.(vii)

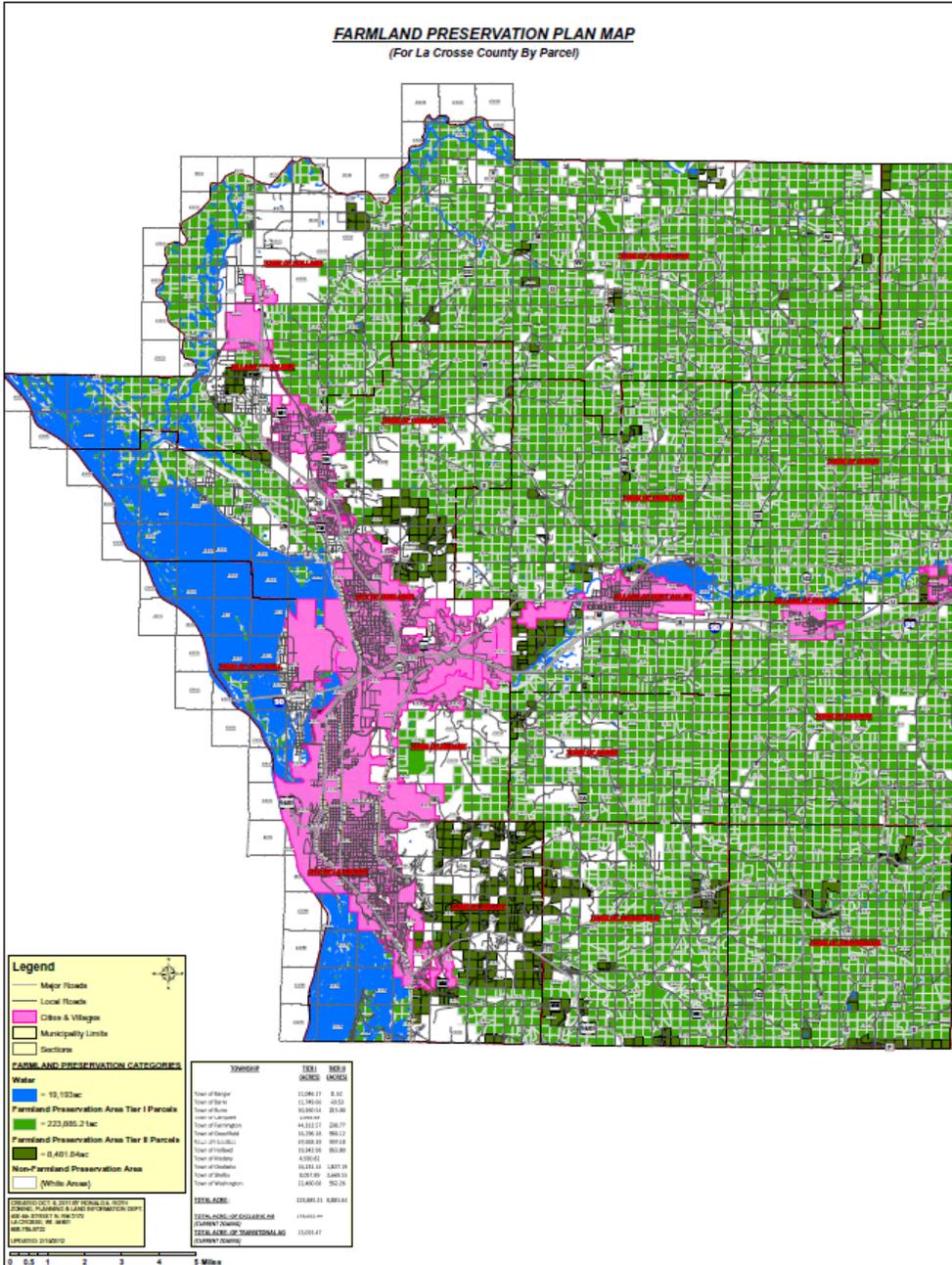
In Table 6-1 below are the activities specifically defined within this Farmland Preservation Plan to assist in the preservation of farmland at the local and statewide level in an easy to find and implement format.

**Table 6-1 Action Plan**

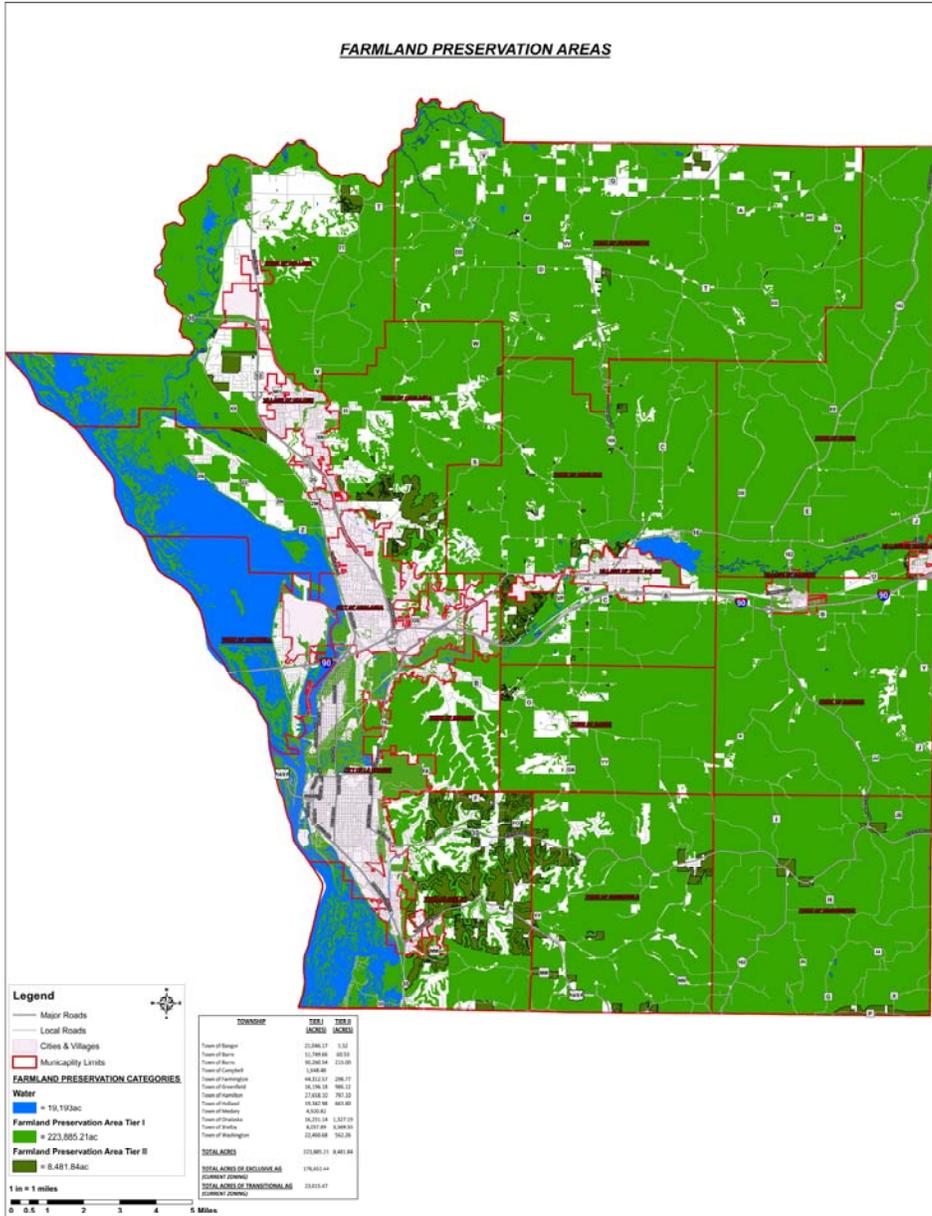
<b>Action</b>	<b>Who is Responsible</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
Certified Zoning Ordinance	County or Town Board	December 31, 2011
Certified Farmland Preservation Plan	County Board	December 31, 2011
Develop a PACE education program	County Land Conservation and Planning Staff	Complete
Assist in the development of Cooperative Boundary Agreements.	County, City, Village and Town Planning Staff	Ongoing
Update County Subdivision Code.	County Planning and Zoning Committee	2013
Develop Standards to review plan implementation progress.	County Staff	Annually starting in 2012
Develop Standards to judge consistency of land use decisions with adopted comp plan.	County Staff	2012
Local Farmland Planned Areas	Town and County Staff	2012
Local Zoning/ Sub-division and Incentive Programs	Town and County Staff	2012
Develop Standard Ag Enterprise Area Petition for General Landowner Use	County Staff	Complete
LESA Analysis for PACE applications and Rezoning requests	County Staff and Committees	Complete
Update Land and Water Resource Management Plan	County Staff and Committees	2012

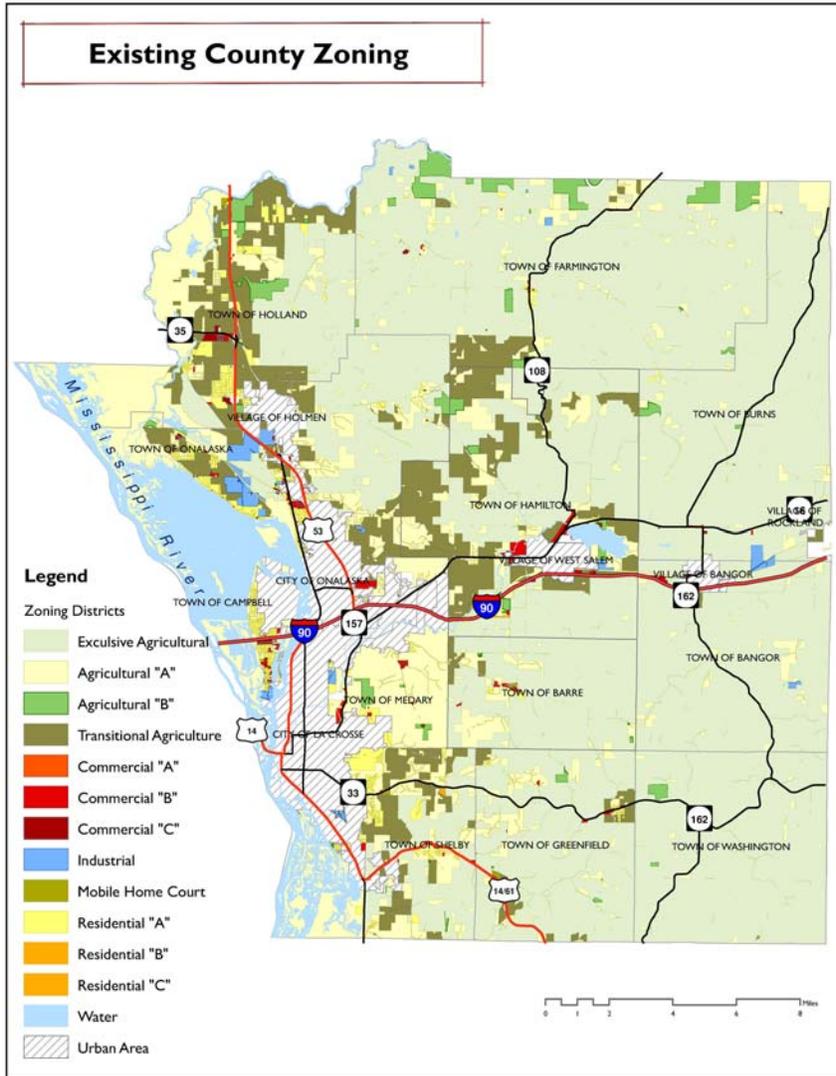
# Appendix

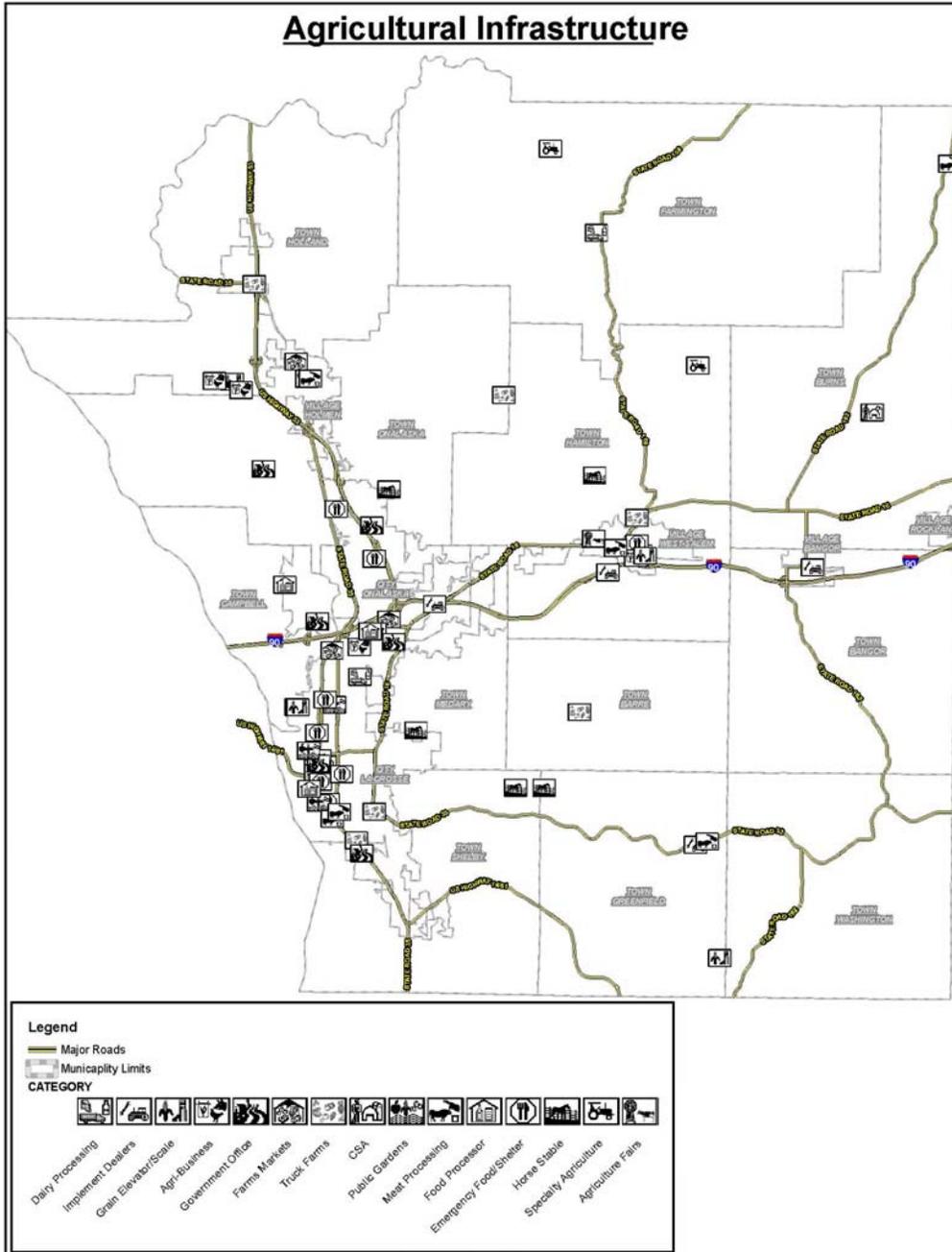


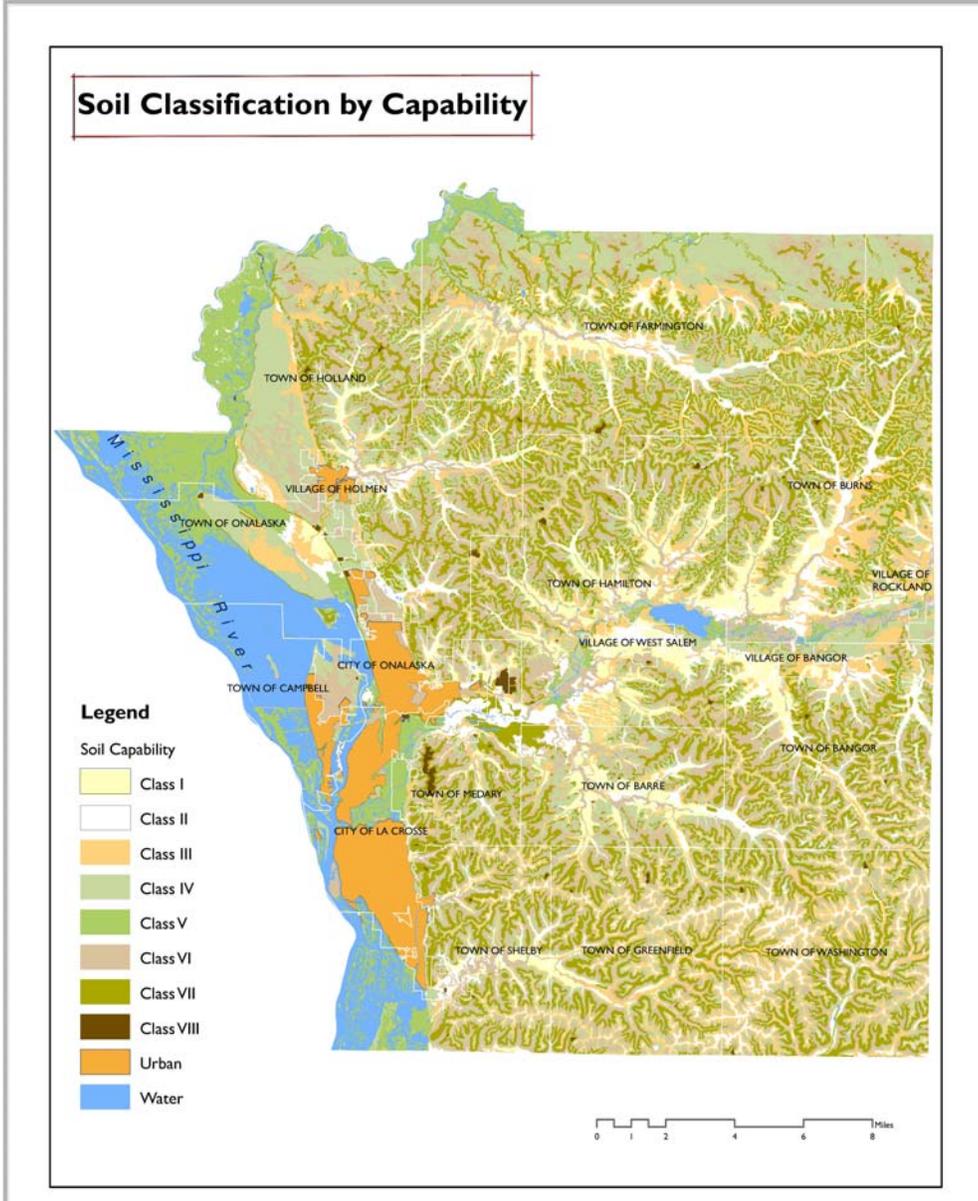


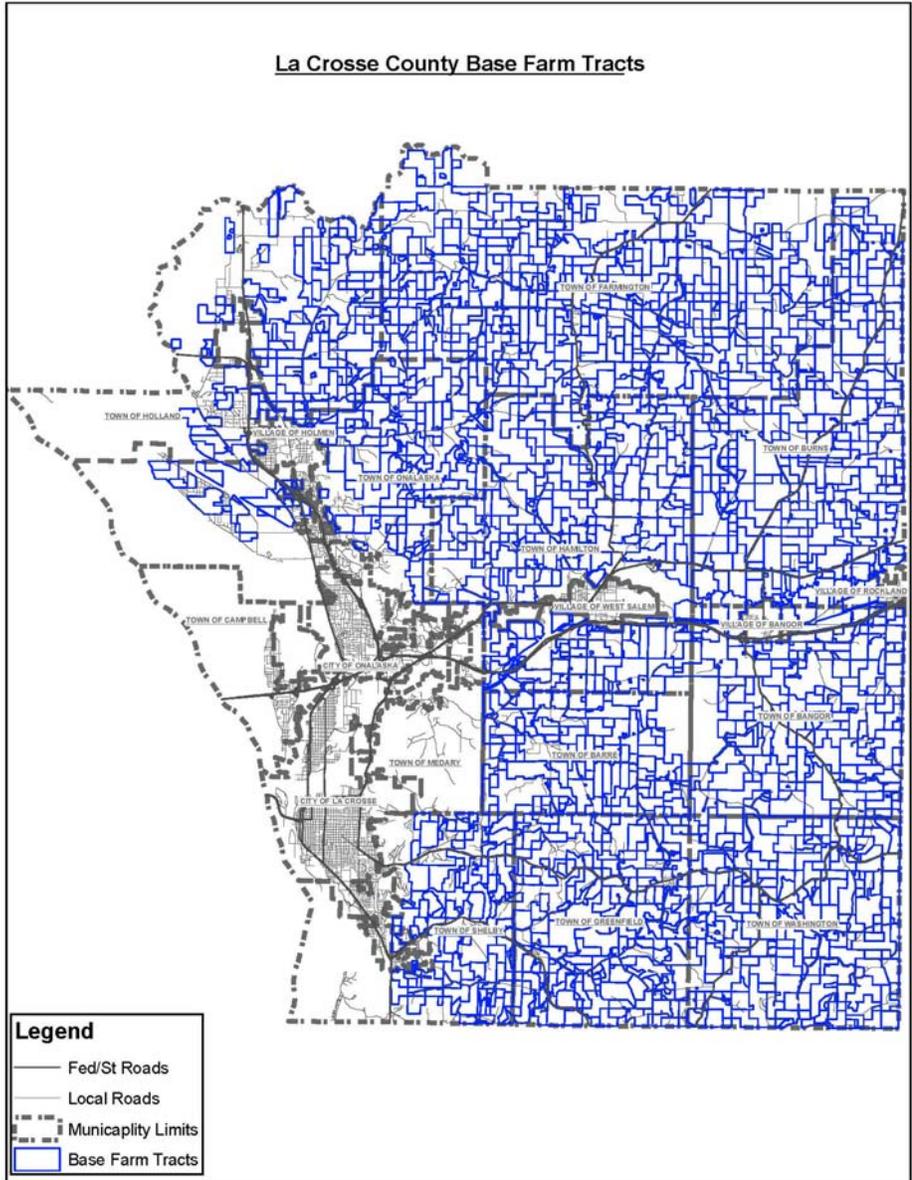
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 31.06 Map 2.3

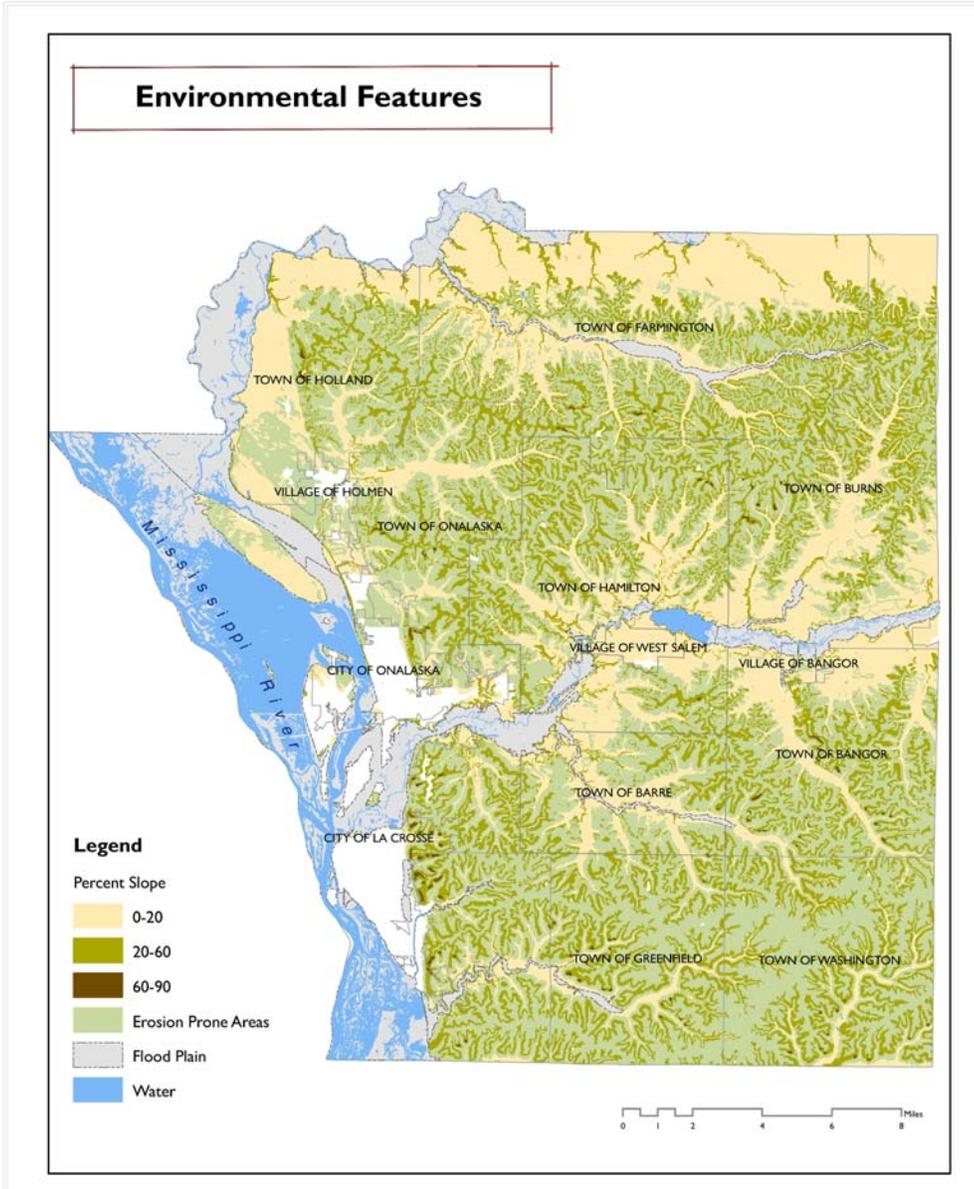


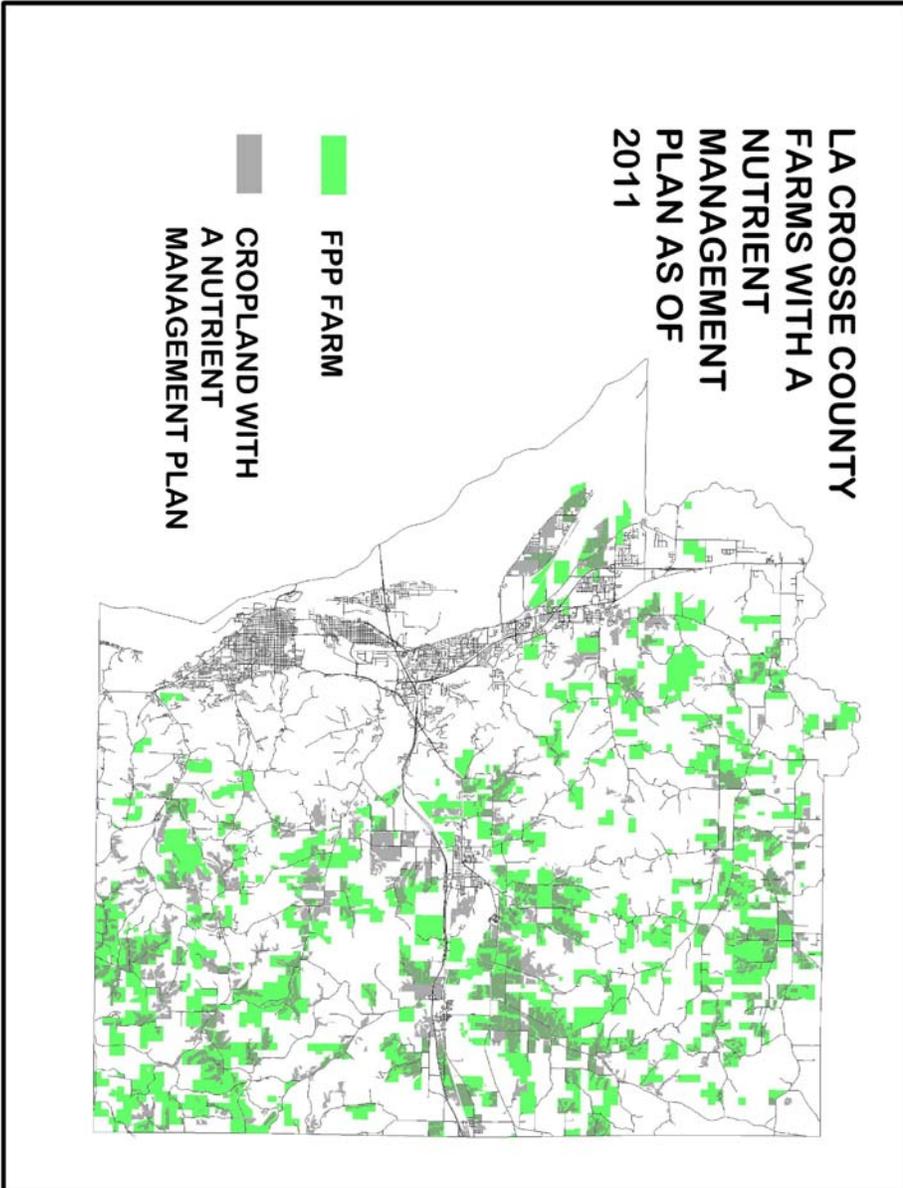














2011

### Exceptional, Outstanding and Impaired Waters of La Crosse County

