

Envision 2050

Economic Development

Chapter Overview

Sustainable • Collaborative • Equitable • Forward Thinking • Respect



Purpose and Policies

Purpose: To establish priorities and recommendations for how La Crosse County assists in the development of a healthy economy.

General Policies:

- Encourage high-skill, living-wage job growth & support workforce attraction, retention, and development.
- Support tax base creation and assist in the elimination of blight
- Contribute to better housing opportunities, neighborhoods, and quality of life
- Work toward greater efficiency of public services through collaboration
- Welcome a diverse population to improve our business environment.





General Economic Development Priorities

- The Economic Development Fund Board has most recently set the following priorities for La Crosse County's work in community and economic development:

1. Develop, manage, and promote appropriate business and development assistance/incentive programs
2. Perform meaningful, effective business outreach
3. Provide support for area non-profit organizations that assist in meeting our big picture goals
4. Promote land use and transportation policy links
5. Develop County-owned properties to highest and best use while working to fill gaps in the market
6. Assist in the development of other (municipal and private) properties
7. Promote and support entrepreneurship
8. Continue to cultivate a local environment of sustainability, building on the existing reputation
9. Work with regional partners to study and provide public and board education on new trends and demographics, and maintain meaningful economic indicators
10. Market the benefits and opportunities of La Crosse County, for both residents and tourists
11. Work with partners to develop incentives and economic solutions to improve the availability of quality childcare and early childhood education options






Recommendations

(numbered for reference only)

-  1. Strive to increase the amount of revolving loan funds and grant funding 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 to encourage equity and diversity and to improve the quality of life for residents of the County.
-  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 revitalization of central commercial districts and nodes.
-  3. Encourage new business and industry investment 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.
-  4. Enhance opportunities to further build the county's industry base through integration with technology-based industry clusters.
5. 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.




Recommendations

(numbered for reference only)

-  6. Encourage the provision of an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each La Crosse County community and explore collaborative initiatives for workforce housing and employer assisted housing with large employers in the area to promote home ownership opportunities.
-  7. 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 within these distressed areas.
-  8. 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.
-   9. Support the education and training infrastructure so that every adult in the County 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.






Recommendations

(numbered for reference only)

-  10. 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 and e-commerce. Encourage pedestrian-friendly, transit, and transportation-ready designs in urban areas to differentiate them from traditional highway development.
-  11. Encourage new business development and expansion that provides “family wage” jobs and a strong tax base.
12. Encourage municipalities in La Crosse County to provide sufficient land supply for both industrial development and continued agricultural operation 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. The designation of this land shall also be established in a way that preserves natural resource-based industries (quarrying, forestry, etc.) and other critical areas.
13. Encourage opportunities to enable family businesses, cottage industries, and home-based occupations.
-  14. Promote and utilize sustainable energy resources as an economic opportunity and encourage increased development of alternative energy markets and businesses.

Recommendations

(numbered for reference only)

-  15. Promote sustainable development, energy conservation, and green building techniques, as well as the use of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing.
-  16. Recognize that the lack of quality, affordable childcare is a significant issue that is not only a barrier to entering the workforce, but also a long-term contributor to social and educational challenges. Work with partners to encourage/incentivize more quality, affordable childcare options within our community.
17. Work with providers to deliver quality broadband coverage to all areas of the County.
-  18. Work with economic development partner organizations to develop a strategic approach to meeting our community and economic development needs.
-  19. Recognize the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on both specific industries and broad markets, and work to leverage available resources to build resiliency in our regional economy. Lead and/or support collaborative efforts to secure Local, State, and Federal resources that will assist in dealing with pandemic impacts.
-  20. Strengthen the entrepreneurial infrastructure of the community, ensuring that entrepreneurs have the resources they need to grow strong, resilient business ventures – from training, research, and business planning to capital resources, real estate solutions, and networking opportunities – and support the full entrepreneurship cycle through assistance with succession planning and transition to new ownership.



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