

Strategic Plan 2024 - 2029

LA CROSSE COUNTY

Exceptional services. Extraordinary place.

Message from the Chairs

La Crosse County is a great place to live, with a robust local economy, strong educational and health care facilities, rich natural resources, and excellent public services that are the foundation of our community. At the same time, we recognize that our county faces many challenges, both current and future. We believe our Strategic Plan will be a vital tool to help us strengthen what the county does well while also identifying barriers to better addressing our challenges.

The Strategic Plan includes seven aspirational statements that describe an ambitious vision for La Crosse County. Together, the statements envision a sustainable future for our county where opportunity is more equally distributed and services are responsive to community needs. Each of the statements includes measurable outcomes so that our progress can be tracked. County staff will implement the plan with oversight and guidance provided by the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors.

The Strategic Plan will act as an umbrella over other county plans with narrower scopes. This includes Pathways Home, our city-county homelessness response plan, our Climate Action Plan, and our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging plans. Bringing those initiatives under the Strategic Plan's umbrella will create an integrated framework for the county to drive us toward our shared vision.

The Strategic Plan is the culmination of hundreds of hours of collaborative work by the board and county staff that leans on data and public input. We are indebted to all who contributed to the plan, and we invite you to track our progress as we move forward. Regular progress reports will be made to the public.

We are proud that the Strategic Plan offers a transformational vision for our community - one that is grounded in clearly defined outcomes. We believe that combination of ambition and pragmatism defines La Crosse County and will be the key to our continued success.

Sincerely,

Tina Tryggestad, La Crosse County Board Chair
Monica Kruse, La Crosse County Board Supervisor
(La Crosse County Board Chair 2020-2024).



Vision

La Crosse County's vibrant local economy and strong public services create the foundation for a healthy, safe and inclusive community.

We deliver the services our community needs and fulfill state mandates.

Mission

Our thriving economy creates opportunities supported by talented people in a community with thoughtful growth.



Economic Growth and Vitality



Our highly-engaged team members feel connected to our vision and see their future at La Crosse County.

Engaged and Empowered Employees

Our county is carbon neutral and our natural environment is accessible and protected.



Environmental Stewardship

VISION

Healthy Infrastructure

Our intentional and sustainable infrastructure management ensures comprehensive access and safety.



VISION



Every member belongs and feels connected in our diverse community.

Inclusive Community

Our community has access to resources we need to thrive.



Robust Support Network

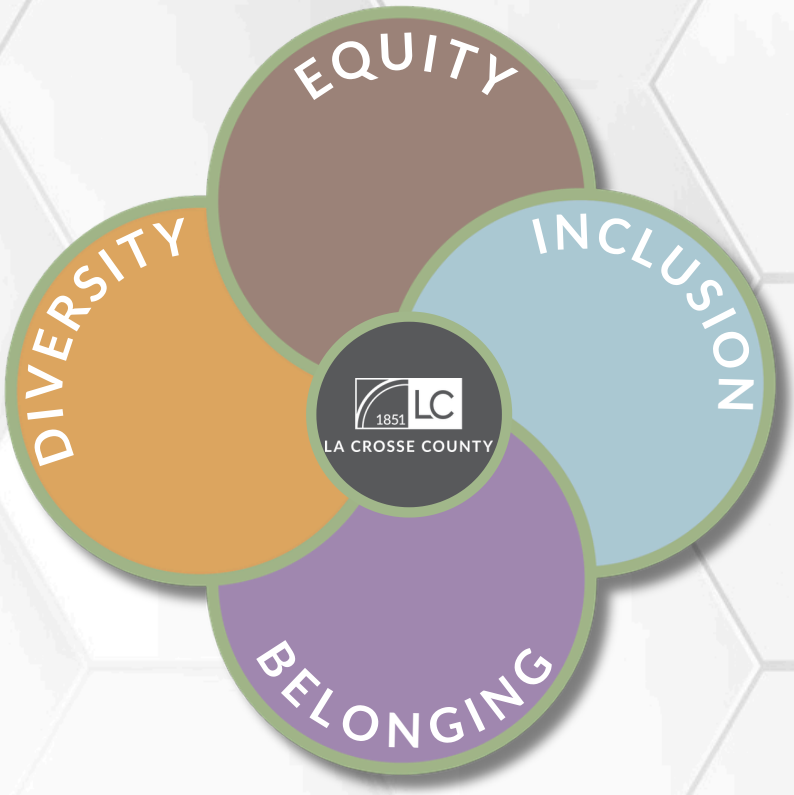


In our community, everyone has access to an affordable home.

Sustainable and Affordable Housing

Our Commitment

We believe that diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) are fundamental to all that we do in La Crosse County. We approach our work and the decisions we make with a focus on DEIB.



The County commits to:

- Ensure every individual in La Crosse County has equal access to opportunities and services,
- Fairness and inclusion for all residents,
- Address disparities directly, and
- Foster a community where respect, fairness, and a sense of belonging are fundamental rights.

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LA CROSSE COUNTY

Our Core Values

Core values are the behaviors and beliefs through which all Board Members and staff approach our work, decisions we make on behalf of La Crosse County, and our interactions with one another. We strive to exemplify our core values in all we do.

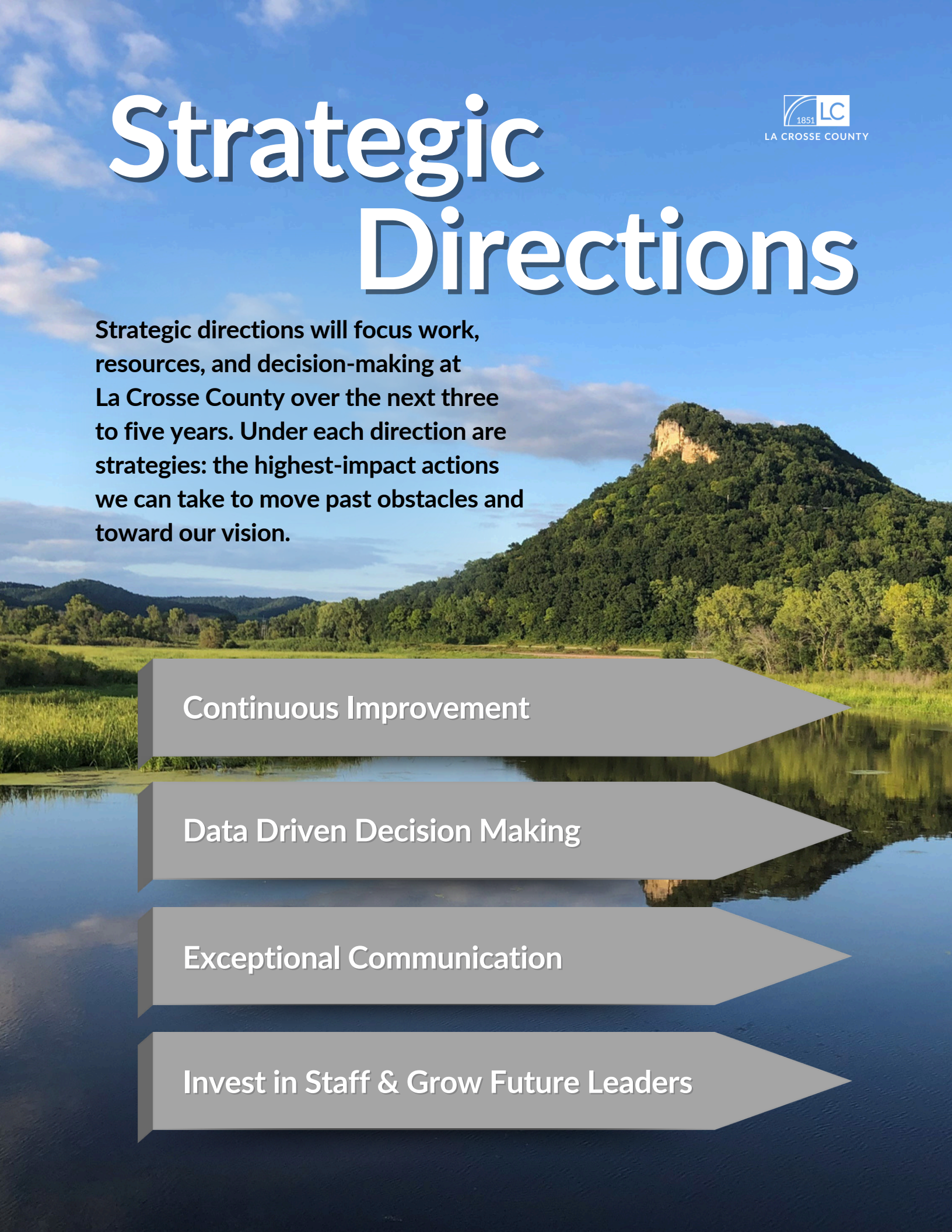


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Strategic Directions

LA CROSSE COUNTY

Strategic directions will focus work, resources, and decision-making at La Crosse County over the next three to five years. Under each direction are strategies: the highest-impact actions we can take to move past obstacles and toward our vision.



- Continuous Improvement
- Data Driven Decision Making
- Exceptional Communication
- Invest in Staff & Grow Future Leaders

Strategies

LA CROSSE COUNTY

Continuous Improvement

- Establish a clear methodology for implementing County initiatives that align with and support the vision and mission.
- Focus on consistency across county operations.
- Implement change management practices to effectively integrate changes into operations.
- Leverage technology to enhance efficiency in operations.
- Operationalize process improvement to standardize and streamline improvement efforts across the organization.

Data Driven Decision Making

- Assess the organization's current capacity and identify gaps in resources and capabilities.
- Conduct a regular, comprehensive community survey.
- Identify discrepancies between current services and community needs.
- Perform an inventory of existing services, both internal and external.

Exceptional Communication

- Clearly define role expectations, responsibility, and accountability across all levels of the organization.
- Define shared priorities, goals, and outcomes and consistently communicate these to all stakeholders to align efforts and expectations.
- Develop a shared mentality that employees represent their departments on a county team.
- Enhance consistent communication processes county-wide.
- Establish joint advocacy between county and municipalities regarding infrastructure concerns.
- Highlight the valuable contributions of County teams.
- Increase public awareness of county proactive measures.
- Leverage collective strengths and resources, collaborating both internally and externally.

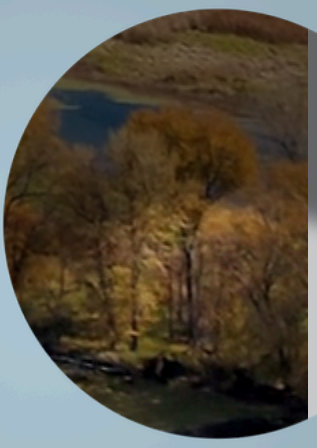
Invest In Staff and Grow Future Leaders

- Build a learning culture that prioritizes learning and cross-pollination of knowledge.
- Build a strategic culture: every employee contributes to the mission and vision.
- Support training and development needs through detailed employee profiles.
- Create employee engagement; become an employer of choice.
- Develop the work pool by promoting internships.
- Establish a leadership development program across the entire organization.
- Invest in equitable training programs and development opportunities.

Outcome Measures

LA CROSSE COUNTY

La Crosse County has defined what success looks like in the journey to our future. Our outcome measures provide evidence of how well our strategies are working and help us track progress towards achieving our vision. Having clear expectations aligns everyone at La Crosse County towards the same long-term goals.



*Updated following County Board vote on 9/17/2026. See appendix for information on completed and retired goals.

LA CROSSE COUNTY

Our Outcome Measures

The following seven outcome measures define one indicator of success for each 2024-2029 vision element. These seven are neither all the County's metrics, nor the only important ones. The County tracks hundreds of metrics to benchmark effectiveness and efficiency of operations, help guide fiscally-responsible decisions, and indicate whether we are focused on the most impactful efforts to reach our vision successfully.

Economic Growth and Vitality

- Increase workforce population into La Crosse County by a total of 5% by 2029.

Engaged and Empowered Employees

- Achieve and maintain an employee engagement score of 100% favorable by 2029, with questions tied to trust in leadership, supervisor support, communication, belonging, and intent to stay.

Environmental Stewardship

- 50% reduction of County facilities and fleet carbon footprint by 2029.

Healthy Infrastructure

- Collaborate with the MPO to investigate a "Multi-County Transit Commission," "Multi-Jurisdictional Transit Commission," or similar organization structure, as a means to establish fast and reliable public transportation alternatives to meet the needs of all La Crosse County residents, including those with mobility barriers. This organization would also gather perspective from municipal partners to act on the investigation's recommendation.

Inclusive Community

- 100% of the community is satisfied with access to County services by 2029.

Robust Support Network

- Complete "Pathways Home," a collaborative plan to address homelessness, by 2029.

Sustainable and Affordable Housing

- Work with West Salem to implement phased approach to development of County Farm.

How We Got Here

LA CROSSE COUNTY

January

Describing: What Do We Want?

- The County's project management team worked with consultants to define all aspects of the process.

February

Understanding: Where are We?

- Strategic Planning Readiness Survey
- Research and Discovery

March

Asking: Where do We See La Crosse County in Five Years?

- Strategic Planning Orientation Sessions
- One-On-One Interviews with Board of Supervisors and Department Directors
- Pulse Check Assessment: Synthesized all research and review findings, survey results, SWOT analysis, and interview themes.

April

Reviewing: Where are We and Where Should We Go?

- The Board of Supervisors and Directors reviewed the Pulse Check Assessment to familiarize themselves with the data and perspectives.
- Newly elected Board Supervisors were given an orientation to the strategic planning process to get them up to speed.

May

Defining: The Future in La Crosse County

- Strategic Planning Event: The Board of Supervisors and Department Directors participated in a three-day strategic planning event and worked collaboratively to develop this strategic plan.

June

Checking: Did We Get it Right?

- The Board of Supervisors and Department Directors attended review sessions.
- The public and staff had the chance to review and respond.

July

Final Review: Let's Make it Official

- The Board of Supervisors were presented the Strategic Plan on July 8, 2024!

Implementing: Let's Make it Happen

Why Do We Need a Strategic Plan?

- Defines a common vision and future for the County.
- Establishes the areas we will will focus on to make progress towards a shared vision.
- Guides decision-making at all levels.
- Serves as a way to keep us all accountable to our vision and goals.

Common Questions

What if something needs to change?

- The Strategic Plan establishes a vision for the **future** and the goals we need to achieve to move closer to our vision. While this is a five-year plan, that does NOT mean it can't be updated along the way.
- This plan is **iterative**. As we accomplish things and get closer to achieving our goals, we will be updating our tactics and outcome measures to make sure we hit the mark.

How can we achieve all of this on our own?

- We can't! To achieve our goals and reach our vision we will need help. It will take collaboration, partnership, and leveraging the great work of our community organizations to make progress.

How should the elements of this plan be used?

- The visions, strategic directions, and tactics we have laid out in this plan are our vision for the future and what we must do to get there. These elements are a roadmap into the future. They are what we are working towards, not statements of where we currently are.

What is "infrastructure?"

- In La Crosse County we consider all of the systems and structures that help us provide the community with services to be infrastructure. This includes roads, bridges, and other transportation related structures, broadband, telecommunications and data processing systems and hardware, and public utilities such as solid waste are all part of the County's infrastructure.

LA CROSSE COUNTY

STRATEGIC PLAN AT A GLANCE

Vision

La Crosse County's vibrant local economy and strong public services create the foundation for a healthy, safe and inclusive community.

Mission

We deliver the services our community needs and fulfill state mandates.

Visions for the Future

- Economic Growth and Vitality
- Engaged and Empowered Employees
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Infrastructure
- Inclusive Community
- Robust Support Network
- Sustainable and Affordable Housing

Strategic Directions

- Continuous Improvement
- Data-Driven Decision Making
- Exceptional Communication
- Invest in Staff and Grow Future Leaders

Core Values

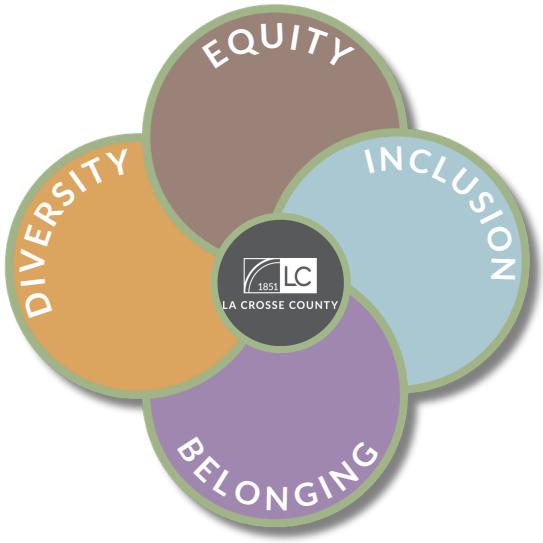
Trusted: We hold ourselves to the highest standards of professionalism, transparency, and integrity.

Equitable: We treat everyone with respect, compassion, and humility.

Effective and Efficient Operations: We provide fiscally responsible, quality programs and services effectively and efficiently.

Proactive: We find solutions today for tomorrow's challenges.

Our Commitment



Appendix

The following outcome measures have been completed and replaced with new outcome measures or retired.

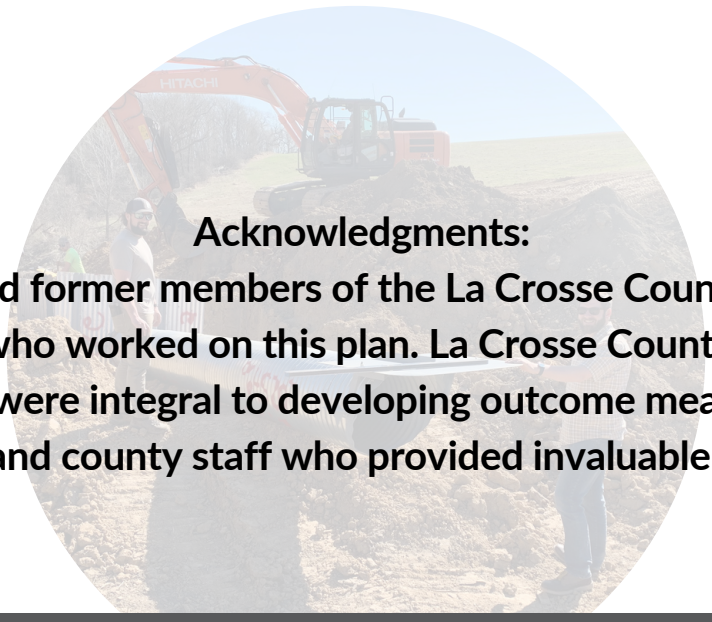
Engaged and Empowered Employees
Completed: Wages at or above market rate for all positions by 2029.
On March 19, 2026, the La Crosse County Board adopted a new compensation plan that brought all employees to market rate for their positions.

Healthy Infrastructure
Retired: 99% of County residents have access to reliable high-speed internet by 2029.
On September 17, 2026, this outcome measure was retired, with staff noting the County would find it difficult to improve access to high-speed internet beyond the current level. As of Dec. 31, 2025, the governor's taskforce on broadband reported that 93% of locations in La Crosse County had broadband access. Of the remaining 7%, about 6% were unserved but in progress, with 1% unserved and not in progress. Between 2024 and 2026, unserved areas not in progress declined by 80% to 397 locations. Unserved in progress areas were down 7%.

Sustainable and Affordable Housing
Completed: Complete housing study by 2026.
In March, 2026, the County released the La Crosse County Housing Needs Assessment. Conducted between mid-2025 and early 2026, the study was undertaken to understand the current state of the housing market in the county, to identify housing gaps and needs, and to propose strategies for meeting those needs. The study can be found at lacrossecounty.org/plans.






Acknowledgments:

Current and former members of the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors who worked on this plan. La Crosse County Department Heads who were integral to developing outcome measures for the plan and county staff who provided invaluable input.