

# La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan Issues, Vision and Goals – Revised Final Draft for County Board Review

## 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:

1. **Varied Growth Management Needs.** Address the growth management and land use planning needs of urban, rural, and suburban regions in the County.
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 zoned “transitional agriculture”. As this is a 20-year plan, consider both short and long-term policy.
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 regional cooperation in economic development efforts. Include Local and County governments and all levels of educational institutions within and adjacent to La Crosse County.
8. **Attainable Housing Stock.** Work with local governments and organizations to ensure that there are affordable and available housing choices for all residents.
9. **Strategy for Transportation Options.** Plan for a variety of viable transportation options that meet the projected needs of residents and businesses.
10. **Efficient and Effective Services.** Maintain the efficiency and quality of County services while identifying areas for improvement.
11. **Implementation.** Identify feasible implementation tools that the County and local governments can utilize to implement the plan, including updating the County zoning code.



## 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.

## 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.

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **Groundwater Quality Goal:** Pursue activities that maintain, protect, and enhance the County's high quality groundwater resources.
7. **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.
8. **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.



9. **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.
10. **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.
11. **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.
12. **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.
13. **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.

