

La Crosse County Collaboration Conference
Challenging Trends- Regional Solutions
Feedback Form

1) What is your initial reaction the “Challenging Trends” presented today?

- *The need for discussion and understand of the impact of use vs. taxes paid to support infrastructure*
- *Surprised at the impact urban sprawl has on the City of La Crosse*
- *Well represented- not many solutions*
- *Scary—I see the reality of the trends not sure what the solution is*
- *We’ve been talking for a long time- this issues are clear; we need to start taking action*
- *Well organized, excellent statistics and data for presentation. Clearly ID’d the major challenges*
- *We need to work on solutions to those challenges- as soon as possible*
- *Very Good*
- *Scholarship program was most interesting- to the regional need to recognize what the differences are really valid*
- *What are the un-intended consequences of these proposals?*
- *Forward thinking*
- *Very interesting #’s. How do you communicate that to “outside La Crosse”*
- *This needs to be presented to other throughout the County*
- *Nice to see us finally thinking regionally so the strengths and resources can be shared for benefit of all*
- *The one’s presented were the “tip of the iceberg” but you have to start somewhere*
- *Short-term depressive episode followed by recovery*
- *Not surprised*
- *Descanting task to get all on same page—get all municipalities/towns to not be territorial*
- *Alarming*
- *Great*
- *Compelling statistics and analysis- well done. What is preventing action? What is the compact at county level? Is the Promise for city of La Crosse only?*
- *Kudos to leadership for the data and collaboration going on already. The information is sobering but we can assume some amount of central of our future*
- *Very interesting and thought “provoking” need to see it begin implementing these programs*
- *Nice to see some quantifiable/empirical data on La Crosse and neighboring cities/towns with respect to revenue sharing/service expense and sharing*
- *Tax disparity and low property values in the city are both huge problems*
- *There is a tremendous amount of housing space available, how much is driven by*
- *I knew this stuff already but never saw it presented in such a clear, factual, understandable fashion*
- *There are some significant issues to address, but I don’t know if our political leadership is there to take on the really tough decisions*
- *It isn’t pretty, but could be worse. Need to be proactive to improve. Need to do something different*
- *Need to take action*
- *Excellent information, data, presentation; however disconcerting it all was.*
- *Troubling, but we need to look at and address this today because trends will only get worse if we don’t*
- *Problems are easy to identify. Solutions require leadership*
- *Needed to hear it*
- *The city of La Crosse will continue to deteriorate unless there is serious intervention*
- *Information is extremely valuable—how do we get the word out? How do we expand our notion of ‘community’*
- *The complexity of the issues*
- *Very good information to show current trends and future projections*
- *Seems like progressive approach to react to pressing issues*
- *Excellent presentations- nice to see the collaboration and trying to solve “regional issues”*
- *Agree*
- *Great idea/start*
- *Well articulated—many pointes were known, but more detail and support. Thanks*

- It is increasing in city of La Crosse and is dragging it downward
 - Too much concentration of poverty affects all others
 - Surprised by #'s
- Crime: II (2)
Why?
 - They run hand in hand (chose poverty and crime)
- Infrastructure Investment:
Why?
 -
- All: IIIIII (7)
Why?
 - They are all interrelated
 - Interconnected
 - It all interconnects and affects
 - All tied together, tax disparity is symptom
 - They are all tied together
 - It al goes together. Solutions must be holistic; problems are
 - They are all interrelated
- None: II (2)
Why?
 - None really troubling- as new problem- now what?
 - Reserve growth wasn't covered

3) What are the biggest challenges in keeping taxes down in the City of La Crosse?

- *Attract new residents and economic development*
- *Non-taxable industry, low house values, restrictions on fire, police services*
- *Tax exempt land*
- *Reducing expenses without loosing essential services*
- *Lack of households over which to spread the burden—only a small % of those who benefit are helping to fund expenses*
- *Shared resources, taxes, income in the county (from suburb to city)*
- *Referee health care costs- other “high” fringe benefits—salary increase containment*
- *Now ID'd cost and strategies*
- *Willingness to get rid of unneeded service*
- *Need to grow tax base and keep cost moderately low- realistically taking on this approval*
- *Police and fire protection, low property values greater services in city*
- *Tax exempt properties 50% low owner occupancy*
- *Keeping the population*
- *50% property value in City of La Crosse is tax exempt; other 50% dominated by lower value props*
- *Keeping taxes down shouldn't be the focus- just make them justifiable through benefits to all—people will pay for benefits*
- *Current economy and the services extracted from la Crosse already*
- *Tax exempt property*
- *Funding incentives to keep people from leaving La Crosse*
- *Resistance to revenue sharing*
- *The amount of tax free land—i.e.: UWL, Viterbo, Western, Gund Luth, Franciscan Skemp*
- *Everyone pays fair share*
- *Tax free property. Make and effort to have all property tax free institution to pay water/serve/fire protection fees*
- *High volume of tax free property*
- *Balance expense accountability with revenue base...how to do that? Property tax-free entities (UWL- County- Viterbo-WTC) 70% of workforce. These organization leaders need to push some of these ideas forward*
- *The amount of services demanded by the population and low property values (rental units may be under assessed, especially near campuses)*

- *High service cost per housing unit*
- *Decreasing property values and deteriorating neighborhoods lack of regional thinking*
- *The lack of viable tax base*
- *Viable tax base*
- *Cant cut our way out*
- *Population decrease and decrease in property values*
- *Incentives*
- *Need to work at finding a corporation to move its headquarters to La Crosse*
- *Can't cut your way out*
- *Cant compete w/ other municipalities*
- *Tax exempt properties decrease tax-base, hand locked status- no room to expand*
- *Services that continue to be in high demand by citizens*
- *Cant cut fire/police*
- *Attracting more tax base. Too much tax exempt property- attracting better affordable housing capturing monies from the users*
- *Balanced housing stock/permitting (low-middle-high)*
- *Kindness of neighboring communities*
- *Core services are expensive and enjoyed by non-paying (or partial paying) residents (nonprofits) and suburban residents*
- *Services are needed and too many state and federal government controls*
- *Spending those dollars on services to support outer areas. We need to figure out how to get outside areas to assist on paying for infrastructure*
- *Spending*
- *Needs to start with reducing spending in La Crosse; recognize that*
- *Their inability to hold down spending – across the board. Their departments spend more than other cities (police & fire, retirees at 55, health care for life) – need to control*
- *Tax exempt properties*

4) Now that you have seen some case studies of regional cooperation and tax base sharing, should our region pursue a "Compact"?

- *Yes: I (26)*
- *No: I (1)*
- *Good idea but may want to start small*
- *Pursue-not want*
- *In things like police and fire*
- *Getting the haves to share with the haves not will be difficult*
- *Seems appropriate*
- *Yes it needs to be done carefully*
- *Consolidated law enforcement*
- *Definitely!*
- *Undoubtedly*
- *Education is a great starting point and a suitable function for local government*
- *Yes—has to be give and take*
- *Yes, but is it possible?*
- *No- the compact is not defined*
- *Yes, but not sure it is realistic*
- *Absolutely yes!*
- *Turf battles may be a problem*
- *Yes- promise program*
- *Too early for comprehensive compact- start on limited basis*
- *Try*
- *No*
- *Yes*

If so...what should its geographic scope be?

- *Include La Crescent*
- *County: I I I I I I I I I I (12)*
- *La Crosse MSA*
- *Unbiased County*
- *La Crosse County/ La Crosse MSA*
- *La Crosse County and La Crescent: I I I I I I I I (9)*
- *Countywide Police*
- *County at lease- region at most*
- *Smaller scale (maybe countywide)*
- *Surrounding communities*
- *La Crosse and Monroe counties and La Crescent*
- *Depends on the "compact"*
- *As large as possible*
- *County for reserve*
- *La Crosse, Onalaska, Holmen*
- *Regional: II (2)*
- *Metro (MSA)*
- *City of La Crosse*
- *7-Rivers (long-range) La Crosse County (to start)*
- *One project before total program*
- *County-wide*

Who would be best to take the lead on implementing a "compact"?

- *LAPC and School Districts and Private enterprise*
- *County of La Crosse: I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I (17)*
- *The County along with the Chamber of Commerce*
- *La Crosse MSA*
- *Unbiased County*
- *The County or 7-Rivers, depending on the scope*
- *County Board*
- *LAPC, LADCO*
- *County Planning*
- *Elected Officials*
- *Planning Committee, County of La Crosse*
- *La Crosse School District*
- *La Crosse County and business community*
- *County Planning*
- *Depends on the "compact", if revenue sharing-county. If economic development- 7 rivers region*
- *Charlie*
- *Revenue- County, Economic- 7Rivers Alliance*
- *Business lead, public sector staffed, new north is a good model*
- *Business and community leaders*
- *Town Chairs*
- *County with strong support from business community*
- *Neutral third party/Seven Rivers Region*
- *City of La Crosse leaders*
- *Unsure*
- *County and School Districts*
- *La Crosse Area Planning Commission*
- *Mayor- County*
- *County of La Crosse*

Comments:

- *Leadership committed to educating non-city residents as to their personal benefits from city services*
- *City of La Crosse can't champion- County is more neutral and very aware of issues- have to frame in the context of what's in it for other municipalities*
- *Establish a "Greater La Crosse Committee" (similar to Milwaukee model)*
- *Those with the money to share should be the one who begin to work out the details- not those who need the money*
- *Need to get successes in other parts of the County*
- *Something similar to Racine or Dayton Town Boards and then the general population should be made to understand what is in it for them.*
- *Region will be hard to implement because its hard to draw boundary lines- County is easier*
- *La Crosse County has a broader vision*
- *Have Richard Kyte do a mini-present leadership program for elected officials*
- *Business pushing community leaders—How do you get it on people's agenda*
- *How do we? Unfortunately the area leaders don't understand appreciate their interrelationship*
- *La Crosse County, La Crosse City—Jerry K. seems to understand very well how to move our agenda forward.*
- *No one will join it if its city led*
- *Strong support from business community*
- *If they feel they don't have a problem then nothing would happen*
- *They are more regional- looking out for the "whole community"*
- *Separate board of leaders*
- *Start w/ one regional issue*
- *RTA would be a great benefit to several communities*
- *Cities need to give something; they want from others*

5) What benefits would be a place-based, universal scholarship program brings to the community?

- *Marketability. Depends on structure as to benefit to reduce city taxes*
- *IT would positively affect all the trends listed above*
- *People would move there for that reason*
- *More stability in neighborhoods and economic growth*
- *TO be known as an "education community" would be another jewel in the city's crown; would also provide support for taxes, the economy, higher education, employers, etc.*
- *Include in ED levels of area population; educated work force*
- *Retention of "people resources", retention of "local talent"*
- *Better desire to stay local and lower cost education cost*
- *Jerry stated this very well*
- *Economic development—businesses follow the talented workforce; workforce wants quality of place first*
- *It would be good boon for the covered communities*
- *Get the information of benefits to all communities out to all concerned (draw and keep people in La Crosse area)*
- *Keep and attract people- improve workforce*
- *Will attract families and developer (employers and their families) will follow good affect to business, even art/music, etc.*
- *Neighborhood revitalization, better K-12 achievement, students following their talents, not just the money*
- *All around*
- *Younger, professional educated persons would stay in city, tax base retention*
- *Economic housing*
- *Most immediate impact*
- *Raise % of educated people, attract good people*
- *Jerry's presentation covered this well*
- *All benefits identified by Jerry*
- *All of Jerry K.'s points*
- *As identified in presentation. Keep it initially City of La Crosse*

- *Attract new people rationally. Increase education level*
- *Offers our children a clear path to educational opportunity which makes “place the city, more attractive*
- *Hope for your future*
- *Keep students here and recruit more students/families. This in turn would increase the tax base*
- *Numerous employees’ recruitment, etc.*
- *Too many too mention!*
- *Increase population, enrollment, and community stature*
- *Talent, much, if not all, will flow from that!*
- *Recognition of good education community. Increase the cities population. Maybe pull in new companies. Distribute tax load.*
- *MANY!*
- *Immediate impact on school enrollment*
- *Will be the demise of smaller satellite districts*
- *Higher educated people. More economic development possibly?*
- *May integrate different economic levels- not a poverty education solution, will drain MD/High income families*
- *Hope—jobs*
- *Yes, we have a ½ dozen families/foundations that can easily make this work*
- *Draw and keep young talent*
- *Recruit and retain in-group families- renewal investment in city*
- *Incentive to living in the city of La Crosse*
- *Future workforce*
- *Spin off of home re-development and increase tax generated*
- *Great benefits if the funding is found*
- *Where will jobs be in people move to La Crosse – good idea however, what would be result*
- *More residents, more and better housing, more and better employee prospects*

Other reactions to this option:

- *Difficult to fund*
- *Warms my heart*
- *Greater community would become more affluent thru education and greater opportunities for employment*
- *Problem: getting area students into UWL*
- *Funding up front is the issue*
- *Biggest challenge- funding, will we draw from outside the region or will be shift existing La Crosse area residents*
- *I could see this causing advanced gentrification and pushing low-income households out of neighborhoods and communities*
- *Hopefully success of the program would breed continued support financially*
- *How affordable/practical is this?*
- *Could create problems for outlying/smaller communities...how fund?*
- *Worry about diluting the donor pool*
- *Keep in city @ start*
- *Like it*
- *Get the business community to support it*
- *Limited to City of La Crosse boundary*
- *As identified in presentation, keep it initially in City of La Crosse*
- *What does it do to the quality*
- *How to pay for?*
- *Who pays, how to sustain, moving from outside- joint effort to bring in employment at same time*
- *Expensive, should be private*
- *City of La Crosse residents should benefit more than other areas that are also in La Crosse School District*
- *Would we have to spend another \$120,000,000 to remodel/reopen schools in La Crosse- how would this affect other districts?*
- *Start earlier- birth to 5- also offer quality daycare/preschool; the K-12 quality will increase*
- *Fantastic*

- *Maybe if the Promise was successful La Crosse wouldn't need the "Compact"*
- *Great presentation—1st step to move ideas forward*
- *Need to meet fundraising needs, success will breed this!*
- *Should bring this "show" to outside La Crosse City. Promote "what's in it for us" to rural areas*
- *Good presentations. How do you promote/share this information with general public?*
- *Would be nice to do scholarship program in several districts to engage their local donors*
- *Who is going to tell "Our Story"- Joe Gow, Joe Heim, Steve O'Malley, Steve Doyle, Jim Hill, Dave Clements—we need a spokesperson(s) with high visibility*
- *Great topic and good session*
- *Only collaborative option that works into future*
- *What about the economic costs GL, FSH, WTC have had in opening/offering new regional campuses outside of La Crosse City (sprawl is impacting them too)*
- *Do a survey to business and residents. Make a county-wide survey. Region-wide equal levy would give money for regional \$ pool. Get early "buy in" both mentally and fiscally so all have a vested interest in success (Compact)*
- *A recurring point of multiple presenters is that the current taxation inequalities cause "taxation flight" from the urban core to surrounding communities. This flight leaves, disproportionately, low-income residents in the city care and higher income residents in the ring communities. One proposed method for solving is to redistribute community wealth. Another solution is to create incentive and structures to redistribute the LMI households. The city has a vigorous affordable housing initiative with multiple houses and tax-credit apartment units, but doesn't this exacerbate the situation? If a combo approach was used taxation shifting (the regional pool approach) and there was support to create housing and community structures that allow low-mid income households to move and succeed to ring communities, then there may be some success.*

How then to create the structures and housing for LMI households? Inclusionary zoning in non-La Crosse (city) developments would provide a delivery model for this housing. Partnership with existing affordable housing developers (Habitat, Coulee cap, Coulee Community Land Trust, etc...) would allow 12 units to be developed and protected over the long term. Combine this with significant impact fees for "sprawl development" If developers wish to build along a county road that cannot handle the eventual demand, then there needs to be a cost structure that addresses that. Developers build these because it is cheaper and thus more profitable—reduce the profit capacity and you will reduce the scope and pace of development. Lastly, if the costs are truly addressed you then incentivize redevelopment of inner-urban areas.

By creating channels and incentive for LMI households to not concentrate in La Crosse you reduce the level of costs for La Crosse, increase the value of property through redevelopment, and reduce the volume of revenue sharing that must occur. Perhaps this makes revenue sharing more palatable and likely.

Additionally, a regional "Housing Trust Fund" could provide the "ring communities" the financial resources to create affordable housing and thus enable redistribution of LMI.

- *Too many people in one room to be able to hear the discussion in your group. Use two rooms or a bigger room to spread out more. How does social service needs affect the county? Jobs, crime, mental illness, broken families, school issues, what can the county do better/*
- *Lousy sound system! Very difficult to hear all morning.*
- *"Compact" would offer the most solutions but very difficult to implement*
- *Need to revitalize City of La Crosse*
- *Focus has to be placed on "our region" not just each municipality- the thought process for this needs to change for this to succeed*
- *Same presentation or listening session for NPO, business, donor community*
- *Use 7 Rivers alliance to facilitate some initiatives as appropriate—if only to disseminate information.*
- *Override of new budget limit or police and fire spending. No one knows this was in the budget. Political pay off.*
- *Why is sprawl bad? Other units of government can provide services cheaper than La Crosse. Need to look at La Crosse, not stop growth in other responsible communities.*