

La Crosse County Collaboration Conference
 Challenging Trends- Regional Solutions
 Flip Chart Notes

Group 1 – Facilitator: Charlie Handy

	<u>Questions/Issues</u>	<u>Consensus</u>
1	Employment relative to poverty rates Manufacturing based employment	Need a regional identity and plan
2	Which issues are the cause, which are the results	All but tax disparity, infrastructure Main concerns: solutions are controversial
3	City of La Crosse Redevelopment – but need affordable housing Shifts of demographic groups are cyclical, moving between communities	Prioritize/balance services Difficult to fix, increase thru growth Need Balance City cannot cut their way out by reducing services alone – explore all revenue sources/options
4	Compact What can the City offer to facilitate this discussion? Is a regional approach best?	YES Concept is good Intergovernmental cooperation may be an issues Conditions are ripe – takes political will Must establish trust County should take lead Business/Community leaders Town Chairs 7 Rivers Region Include Fort McCoy in region
5	Promise How to pay for it? Private Funding? Will having the promise available on its own help students? How is it sustained? Is not a low poverty education solution	May help integrate different economic levels Break poverty cycle Need continued support system Possibly Need to define funding terms Endowment probably not feasible
6	3 Options 1) cost/service reductions 2) compact 3) scholarship	Scholarship – immediate effect Compact – think regional - most sustainable 2 & 3 Best options

Group 2 – Facilitator: Greg Flogstad

1	<p>Challenging Trends Reaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get it done ▪ Data compelling ▪ Territorial problem ▪ Some consolidations – need more – assessor, law enforcement ▪ Dilapidated housing – Jackson-Market, Brewery, near north side ▪ Viterbo helping – south side community center ▪ Outside communities don't see La Crosse's problems affecting them ▪ Expanding sense of community
2	<p>Poverty – hitting us the fastest (second only to Milwaukee) Racial equation attached to it Bad housing attracts poverty – constant moving families</p>
3	<p>Keeping taxes down:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tax free land ▪ Accountability on expenditures ▪ Locked in – bluffs, rivers, wetlands, no cornfields nearby ▪ Too many competing governments ▪ Tax disparity driving urban flight ▪ Poorer families come here because of housing opportunities <p>Must be optimistic – can't totally dwell on negatives</p>
4	<p>Compact?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only if we want to survive! ▪ Show what cost and benefits are <p>Scope?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ La Crosse County ▪ Plus La Crescent, MN ▪ Need business leaders, need town officials on board – education <p>Leader?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only makes sense for County to take lead <p>Use the Reinhart Ethical Center to bring community leaders together and think ethnically about the compact – put parochialism aside and move forward</p>
5	<p>Benefits of Scholarship?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jerry's presentation said it all ▪ Immediate impact ▪ Should first start in City of La Crosse and then move out
6	<p>Most Promise to Reduce Sprawl?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All should be moved forward ▪ They are not mutually exclusive
7	<p>Other Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get our gifted people together to sell these programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joe Heim ○ Chancellor Gow ○ Sheila Garrity ○ Chamber of Commerce ○ Steve Doyle and Steve O'Malley ○ LADCO ○ Superintendents

Group 3 – Facilitator: Bryan Law

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foresight in region (confronting problems) ▪ How to preserve good quality of life ▪ Get word out about these problems; take this show on the road ▪ What’s in it for communities outside La Crosse? – make sure to communicate this
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poverty – affects lots of other issues, but other communities as well (free and reduces lunch in Onalaska/Holmen) ▪ Tax Disparity – different needs – infrastructure, building inspection, assessments
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 50% of property value in City of La Crosse is tax-exempt; other 50% dominated by lower-value properties ▪ Big employers also tax-exempt ▪ Low owner-occupancy rate ▪ Population decreasing ▪ Aging population – increasing vacancies/decreasing values
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ County Compact – at least to begin – could grow later to include La Crescent, 7 Rivers Region, other Counties ▪ County should take the lead ▪ Make sure communities understand there is something in it for them
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality of jobs increase if scholarship ▪ Employers would come here seeking good employees ▪ Might result in school consolidation – small districts might not be able to afford scholarship alone ▪ Increased quality of life – free college is good for everyone ▪ Investigate appropriate methods of funding (1st dollar, 2nd dollar, etc)
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All three can work together, but compact or scholarship alone would be a good start – reducing City expenses is non-starter

Group 4 – Facilitator: Randy Nelson

1	<p>Reactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good to get info out so we can think regionally ▪ Surprised at length of time talking without action ▪ Need to build new schools when students move ▪ Surprised as amount of saleable land here ▪ Relationship of poverty vs. unemployment rate ▪ Interested in the history of this situation ▪ Must consider services available with low-tax communities ▪ Concern that there is so much complexity to solutions ▪ Can’t just cut taxes, but can attract thru education ▪ Put money where economic impact will be felt ▪ What effect on donations to other organizations?
2	<p>Most Troubling?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tax disparity is an issue to growth (5) ▪ Population decline – need to retain if not grow (1) ▪ Need for GDP figure for comparison ▪ Reliance on enrollment to determine state aid/need (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decline might not be because of moving out

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Infrastructure investment ▪ Poverty ▪ What are the incentives at the root of the problem that are drawing people out of the City? 												
3	<p>Biggest Challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to look at all factors that affect the tax ▪ What is history of low tax base? ▪ City is landlocked – where will new families live? ▪ Nonprofits provide services but don't pay tax ▪ Population decline ▪ 70% of housing < \$100k and older – means increased need for fire protection, etc. ▪ Highly transient college population – landlord standards drop, inferior housing ▪ Development should pay full cost of infrastructure ▪ Increasing tax base while maintaining a reasonable comfort level for businesses, families, etc. 												
4	<p>Compact Model: Tax Sharing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Joint effort of those here today plus others ▪ LAPC ▪ Work with “Education Community” tool to attract <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marketing effort ▪ Make it privately led, publically operated ▪ Applying it to increased taxes only would be easier ▪ Will take regional buy-in and effort to keep surrounding communities aware of benefits ▪ Possibly an entertainment tax or sustainability tax ▪ Keep studying other cities ▪ Don't focus so much on being “competitive” 												
5	<p>Benefits of Promise?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would it attract people only to suburban communities but still in the district? ▪ Model that relates tax base to distribution ▪ Potential to increase population, reduce poverty, fill vacant lots ▪ Huge ripple effect – housing, income, health, etc. ▪ Try to focus on earlier education ▪ Model could be applied to other populations and needs – underserved professions – become educators ▪ Breaks the generational cycle of not going to college ▪ Benefit beyond the City into the region 												
6	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Option</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>Most Promise</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>Pursue</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cost/Service Reduction</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>(may follow others naturally)</i></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Compact</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Promise (Scholarships)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only benefits school district at first ▪ Ultimately extend regionally ▪ Might reduce need for compact ▪ Replicate in other communities 	<u>Option</u>	<u>Most Promise</u>	<u>Pursue</u>	Cost/Service Reduction	<i>(may follow others naturally)</i>		Compact	1	3	Promise (Scholarships)	7	6
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